



CEREBUS

Volume

13





aardvark-vanaheim inc

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fax transmission

from Dave Sim at fax no.

to the attention of: Anyone reading
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(I don't have e-mail and can only be contacted
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Sincere thanks to everyone who has devoted that most valuable of human commodities -- their time -- to reading my and Gerhard's work.

Dave Sim, creator, writer, co-artist

Gerhard does prints and commissions and can be contacted at gerhardart.com

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GOING HOME

by

Dave Sim and Gerhard

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Dave's dedication:

To MATTHEW J. BRUCCOLI
with the greatest respect
from a novice to a veteran
scholar squirrel.

Gerhard's dedication:

To everyone I drove nuts at
PRENEY PRINT & LITHO
with all this tone and crosshatching

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Introduction:

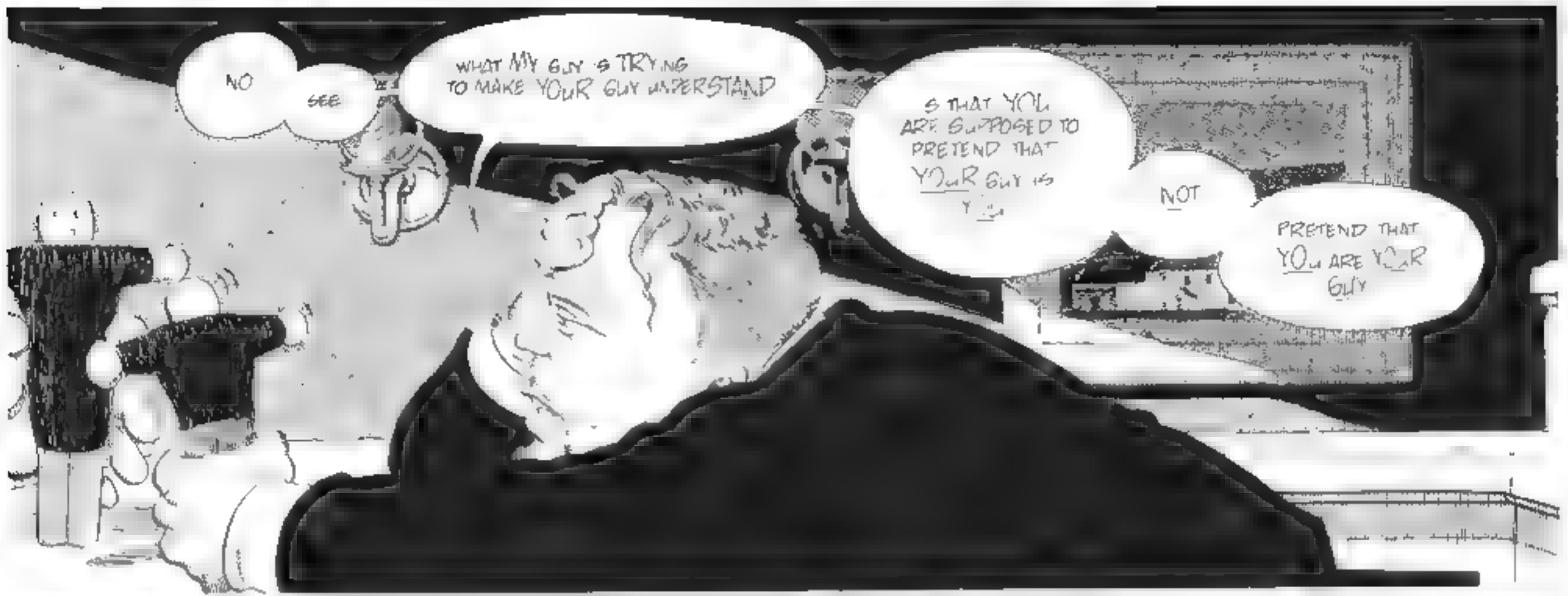
Going Home—the penultimate Cerebus storyline—is a work in progress as I type this introduction. In their serialized form in the monthly *Cerebus* comic book, the pages contained in this volume were described as the first two books of *Going Home*: “Sudden Moves” (serialized in *Cerebus* 232 to 239) and “Fall and the River” (*Cerebus* 240 to 250), with the third book—“Form & Void”—being the aforementioned work in progress.

Owing to the confusion which would result from describing the book that you hold in your hands as Volume One of *Going Home* and its contents as Book One and Two of *Going Home* and the next volume in the *Cerebus* series as Volume Two of *Going Home* and its contents as Book Three of *Going Home* (leading, inevitably to the question: “Where are Books One and Two of Volume Two?” and compounding the resultant confusion with the answer: “Books One and Two are in Volume One”), I have, with a certain amount of foresight, decided to dispense with Book One, Book Two, Book Three, Volume One, and Volume Two entirely. Thus, you hold in your hands *Going Home* (*Cerebus* volume 13) and, God willing, a year and a half from now we will make available *Form & Void* (*Cerebus* volume 14), which will be described parenthetically as *Going Home* volume II. The astute reader will be forgiven for doubting that this will in any way result in less confusion, but, trust me, it will.

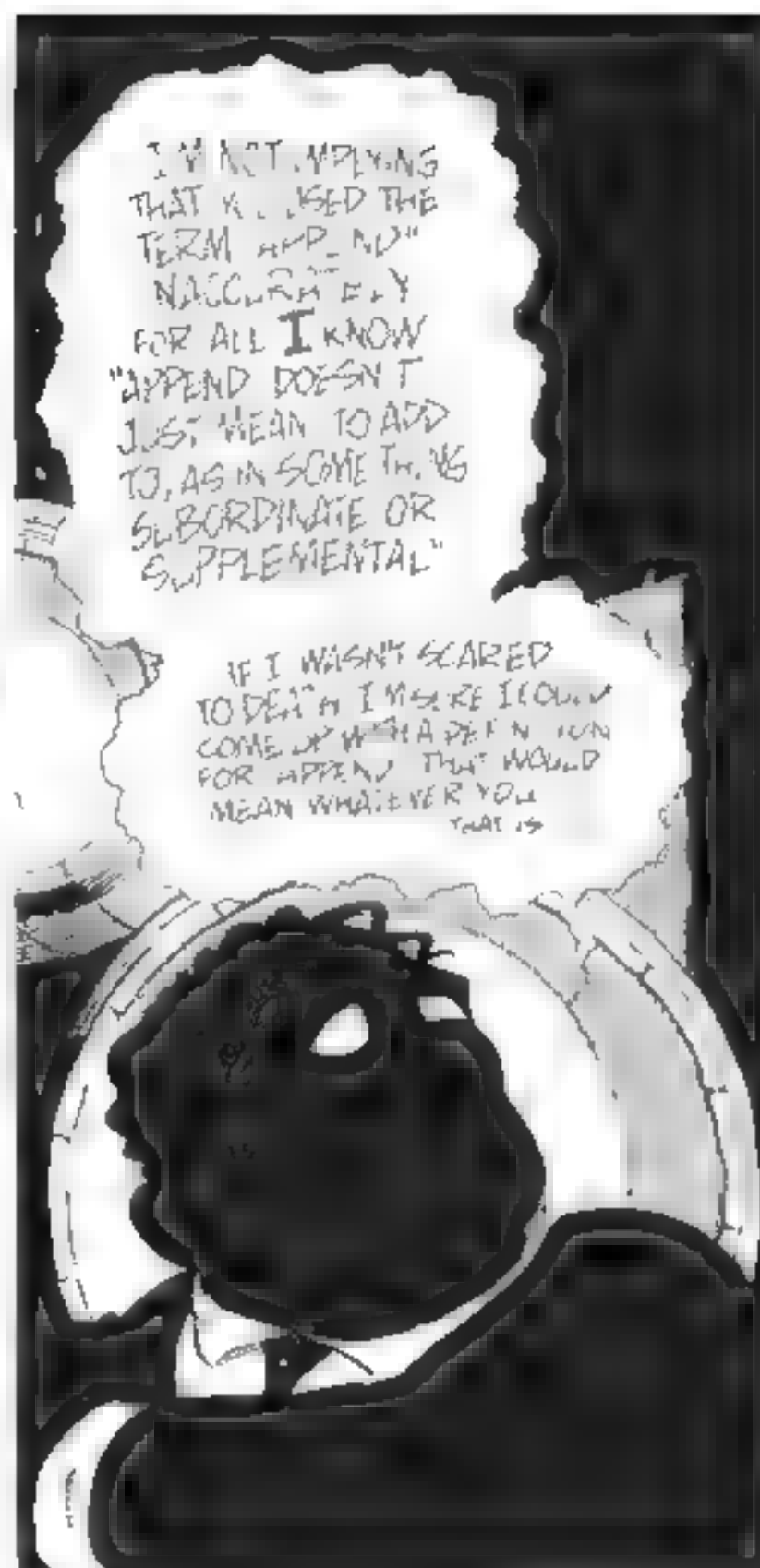
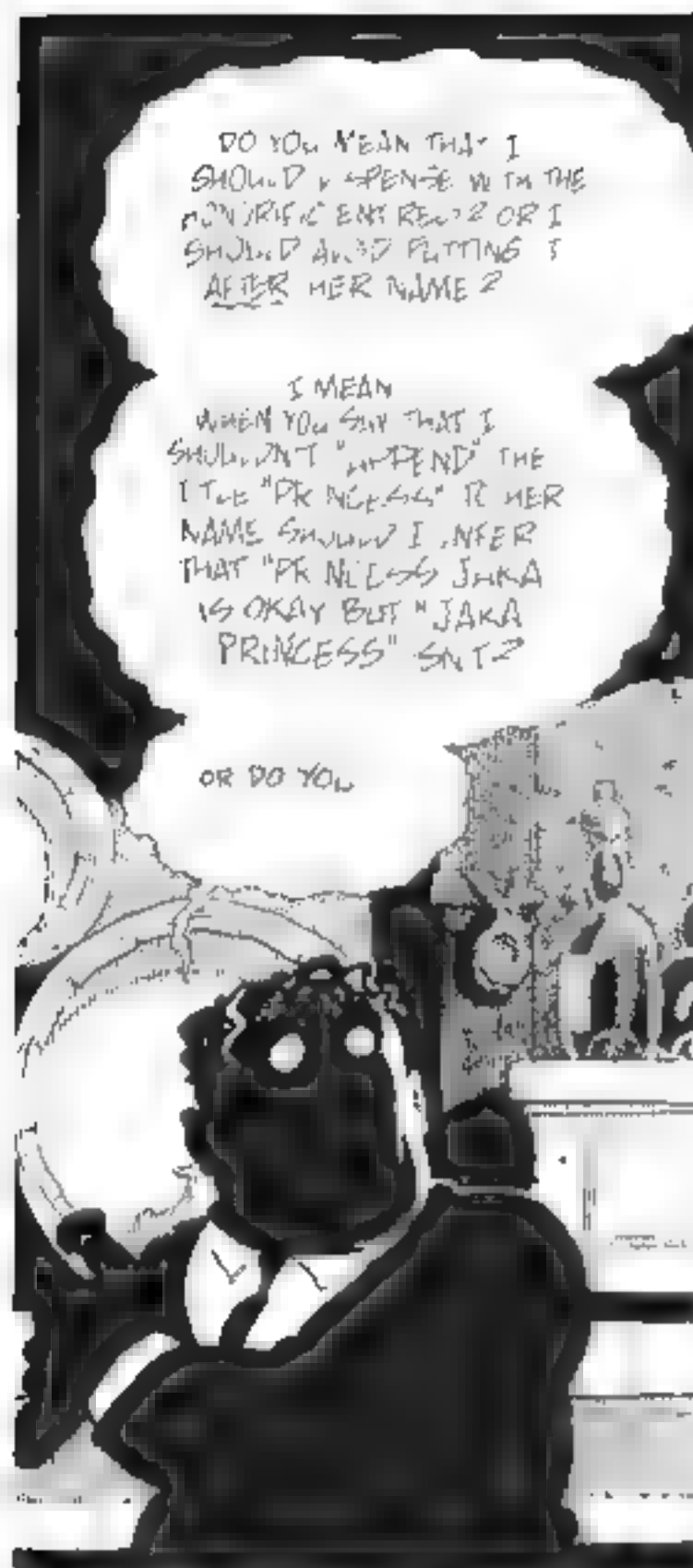
This is also one of the two (possibly three) *Cerebus* books I intend to annotate, said annotations for “Fall and the River” following immediately after that chapter/part/section. For those of you who have managed to keep yourselves from finding out anything about *Going Home* while it was being serialized (and congratulations if you have), I will cryptically mention here that my latest literary theft makes his debut in “Fall and the River” and is foreshadowed in the closing pages of “Sudden Moves” with his wife’s maiden name, his university, his club at university, his wife’s hometown, and the name of the street of his boyhood in St. Paul, Minnesota inserted here and there on the various maps illustrating Cerebus and Jaka’s progress—or, rather, “progress” (not to mention one of his wife’s pet names for him recorded for posterity on the occasion of the birth of their daughter on October 26, 1921—“Oh, God, Goofo, I’m drunk. Mark Twain. Isn’t she smart—she has the hiccups. I hope it’s beautiful and a fool—a beautiful little fool”—as his wife recovered from the effects of the anesthesia. He eventually gave the line to one of his many memorable female characters in a novel published in 1925). If “St. Paul, Minnesota” just gave the game away (after all your best efforts to keep insulated from any foreknowledge of what you are about to read), then you have only yourself to blame for being too damned well read.

Dave Sim
Kitchener, Ontario
January 25, 2000

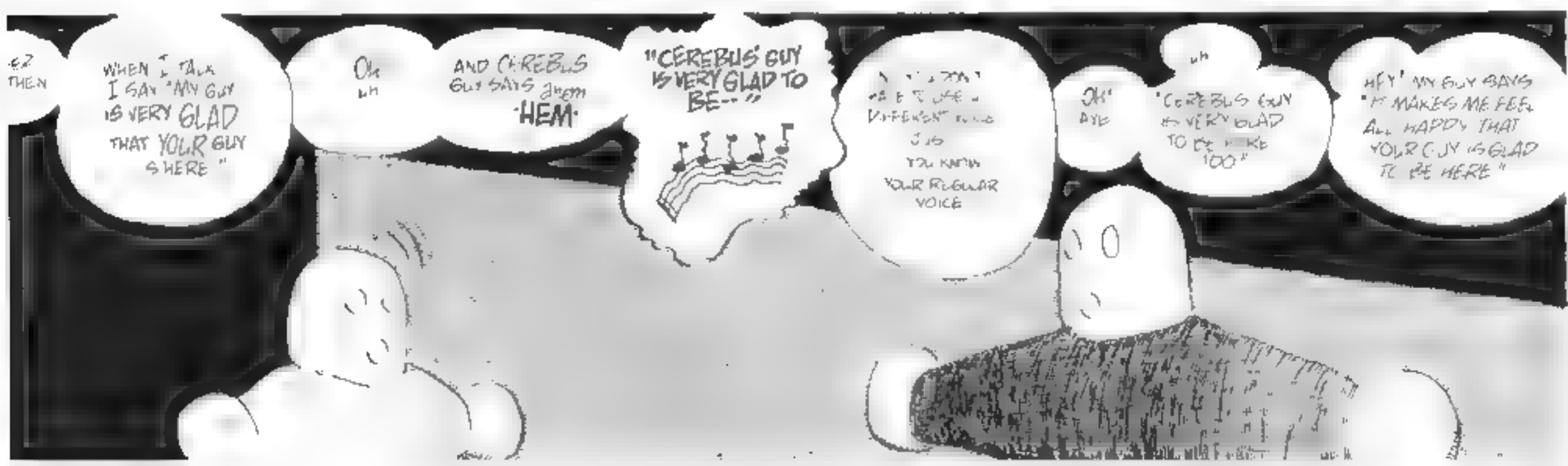
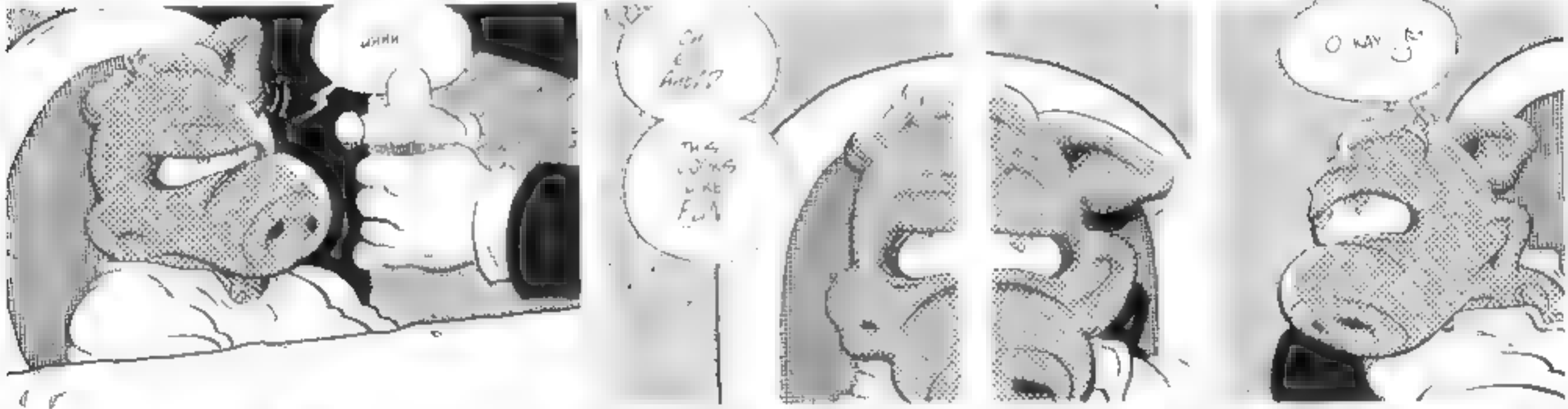
SUDDEN MOVES



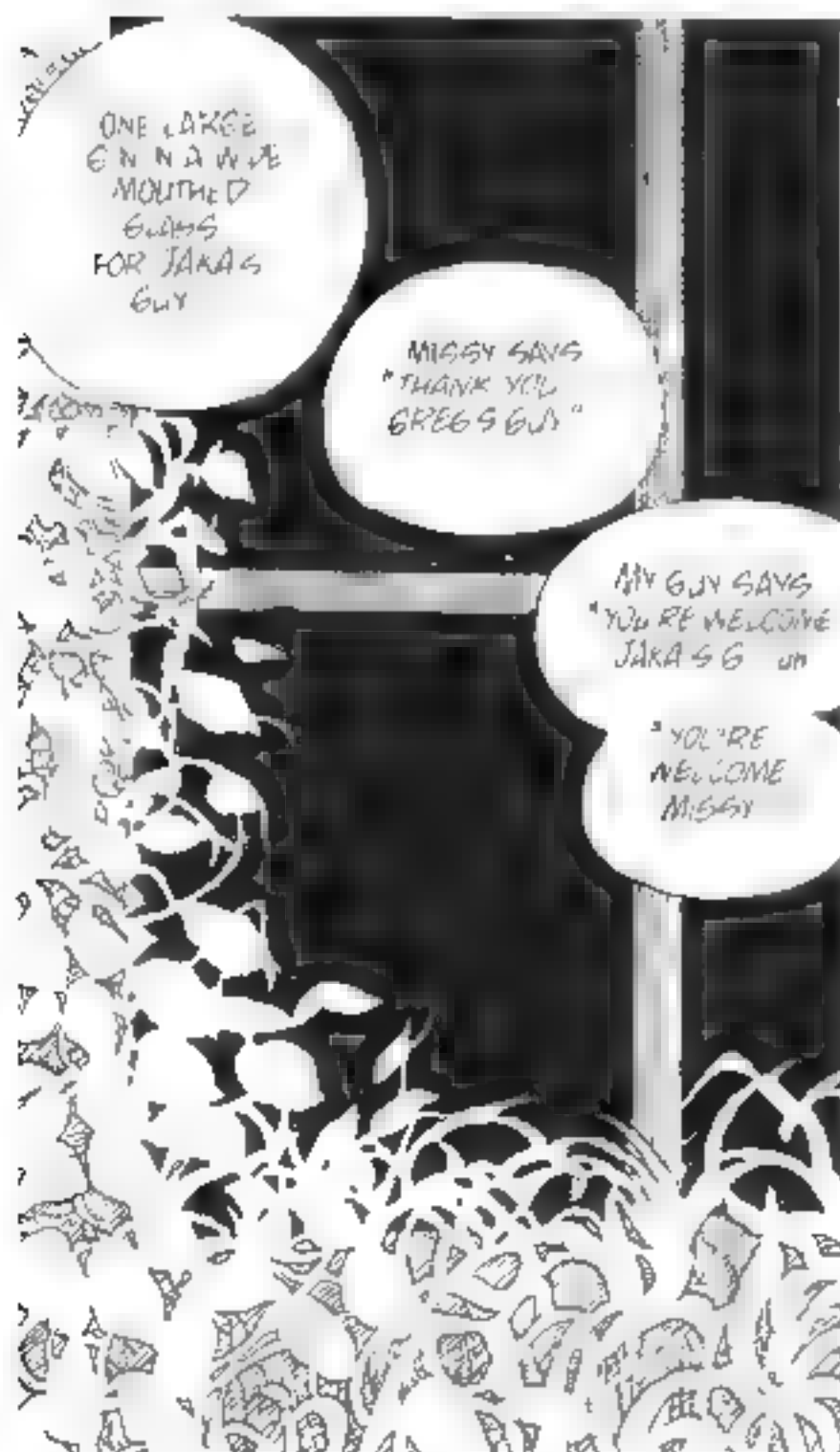


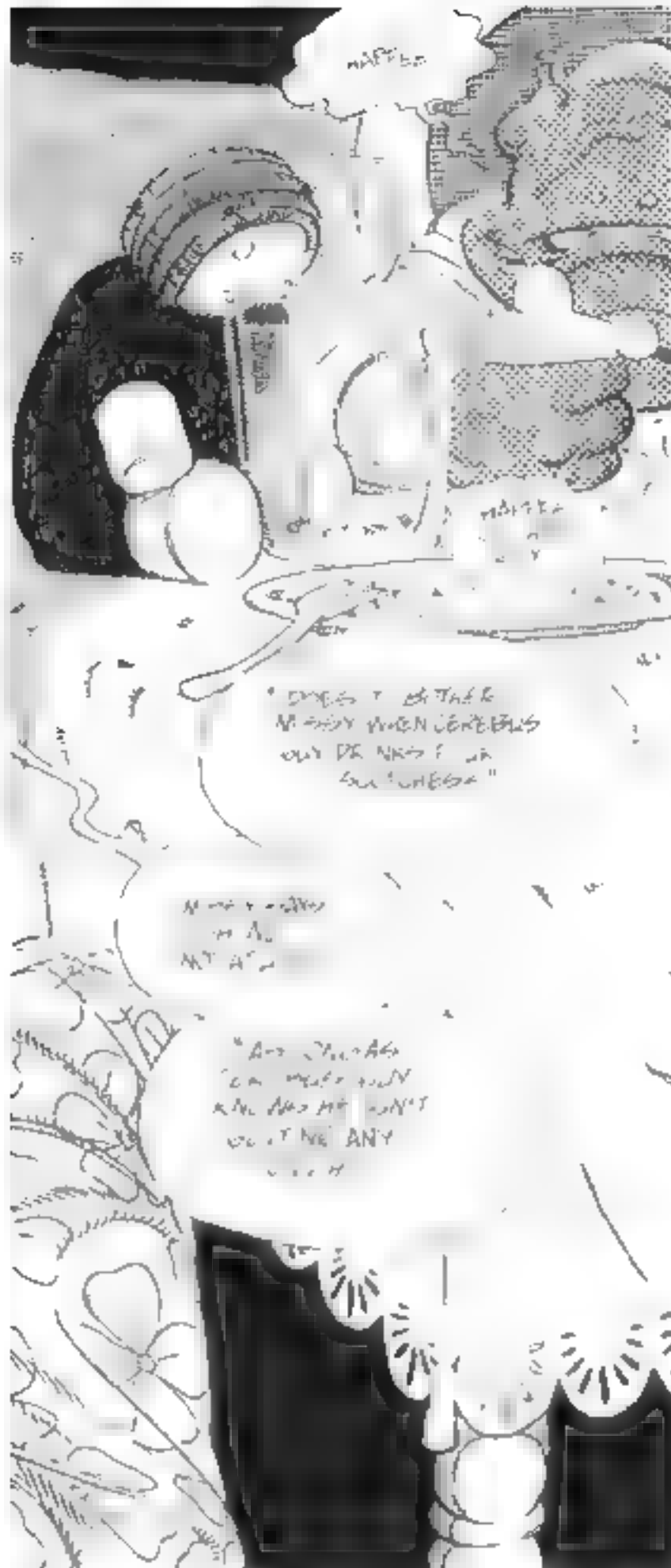
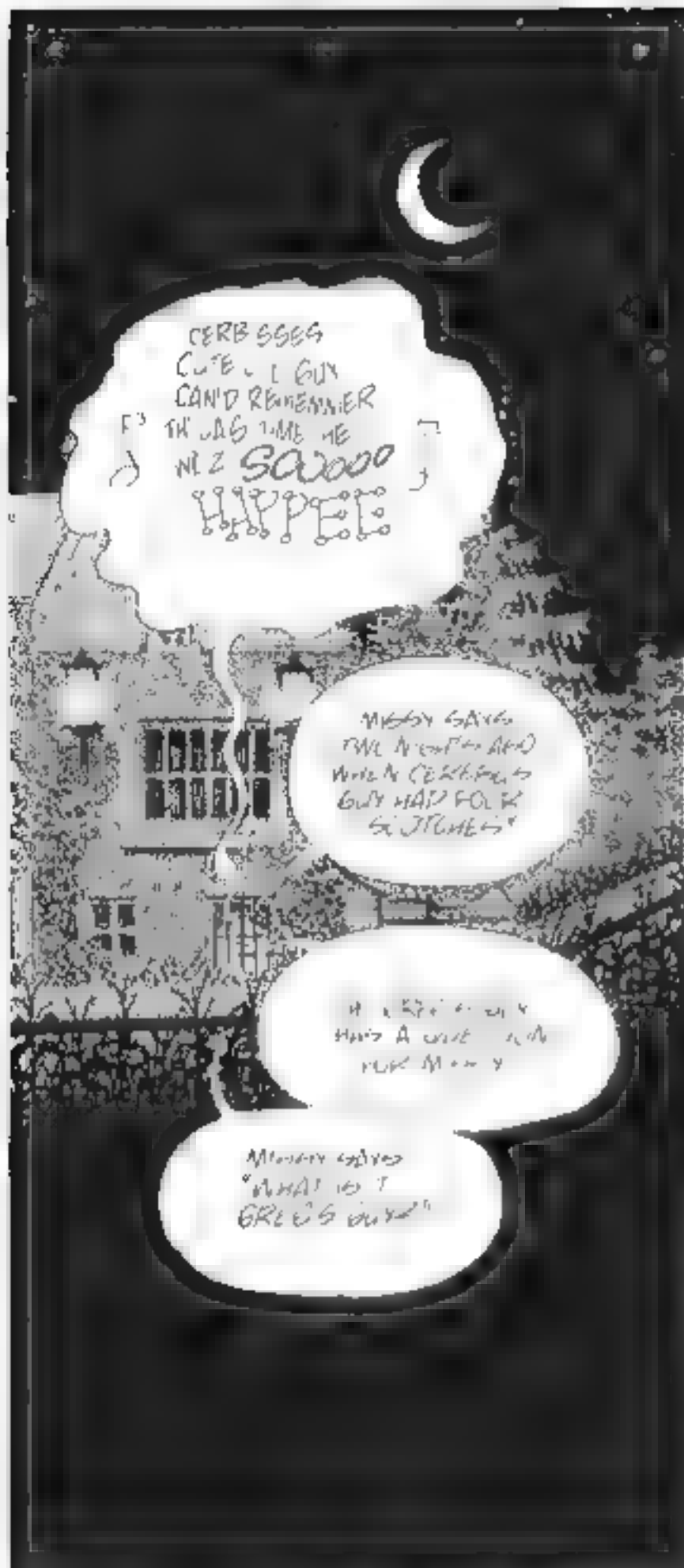


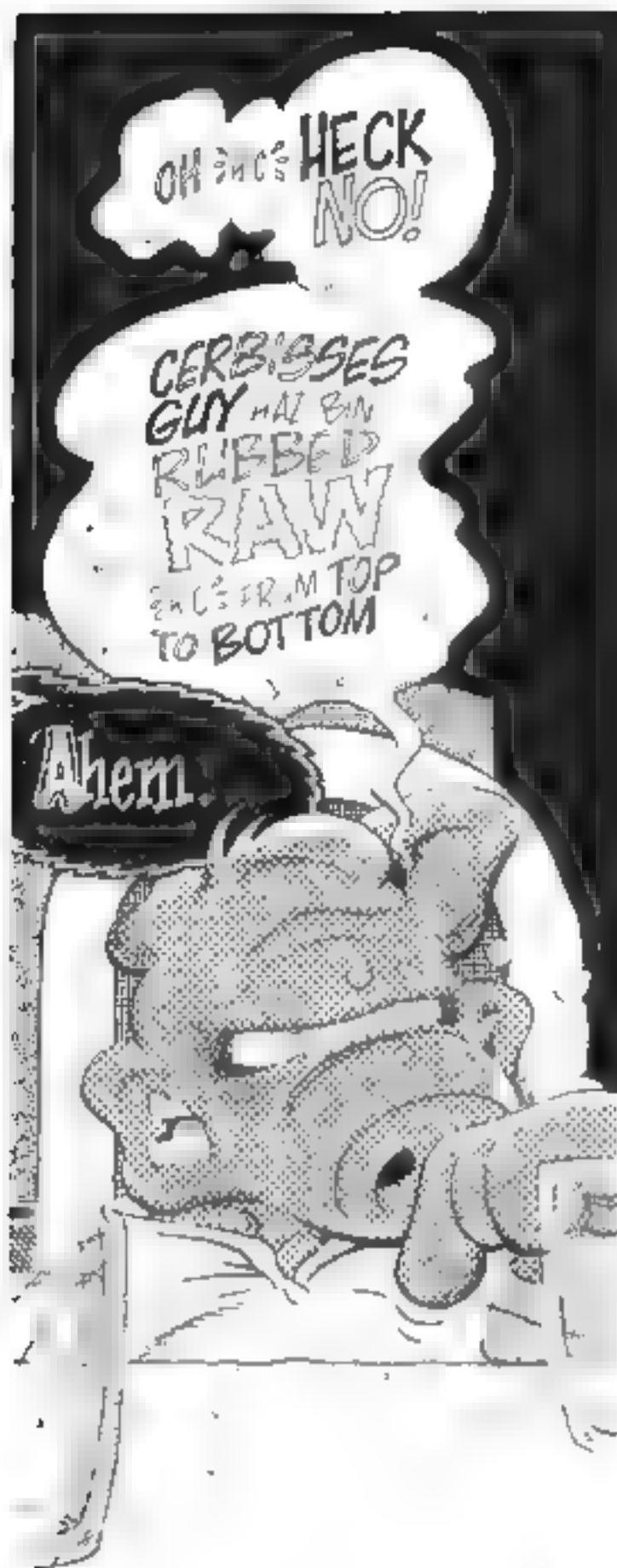




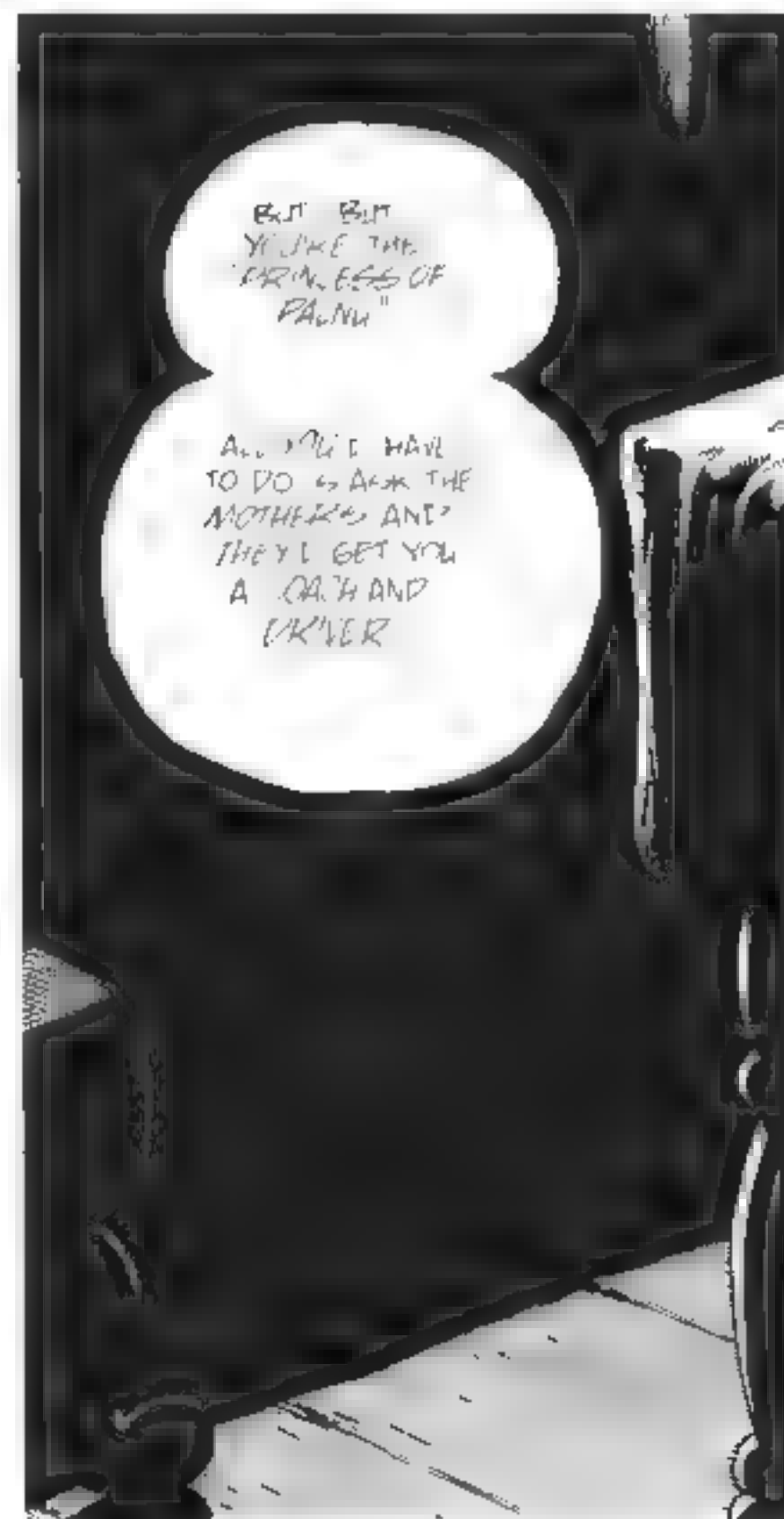
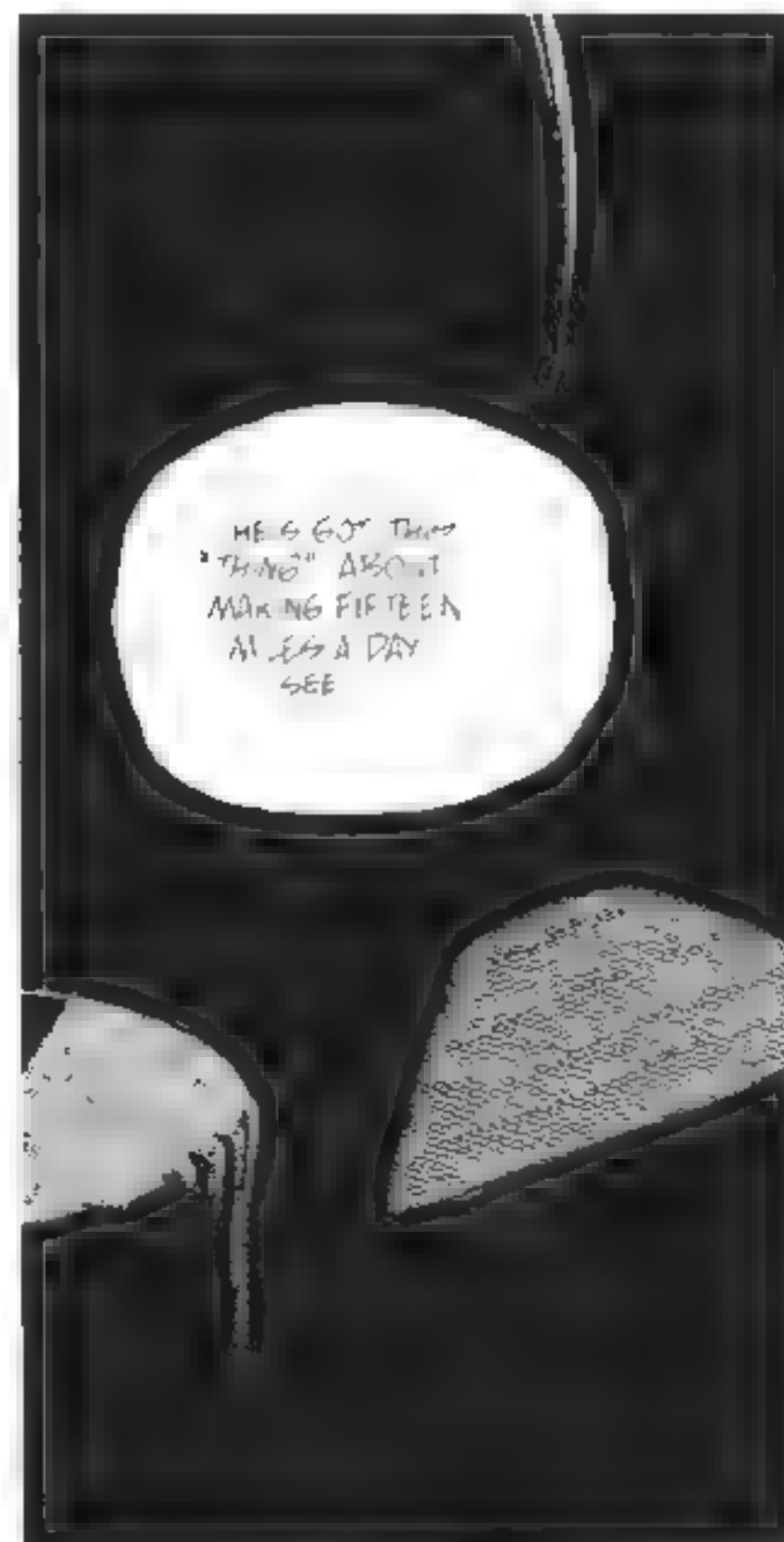
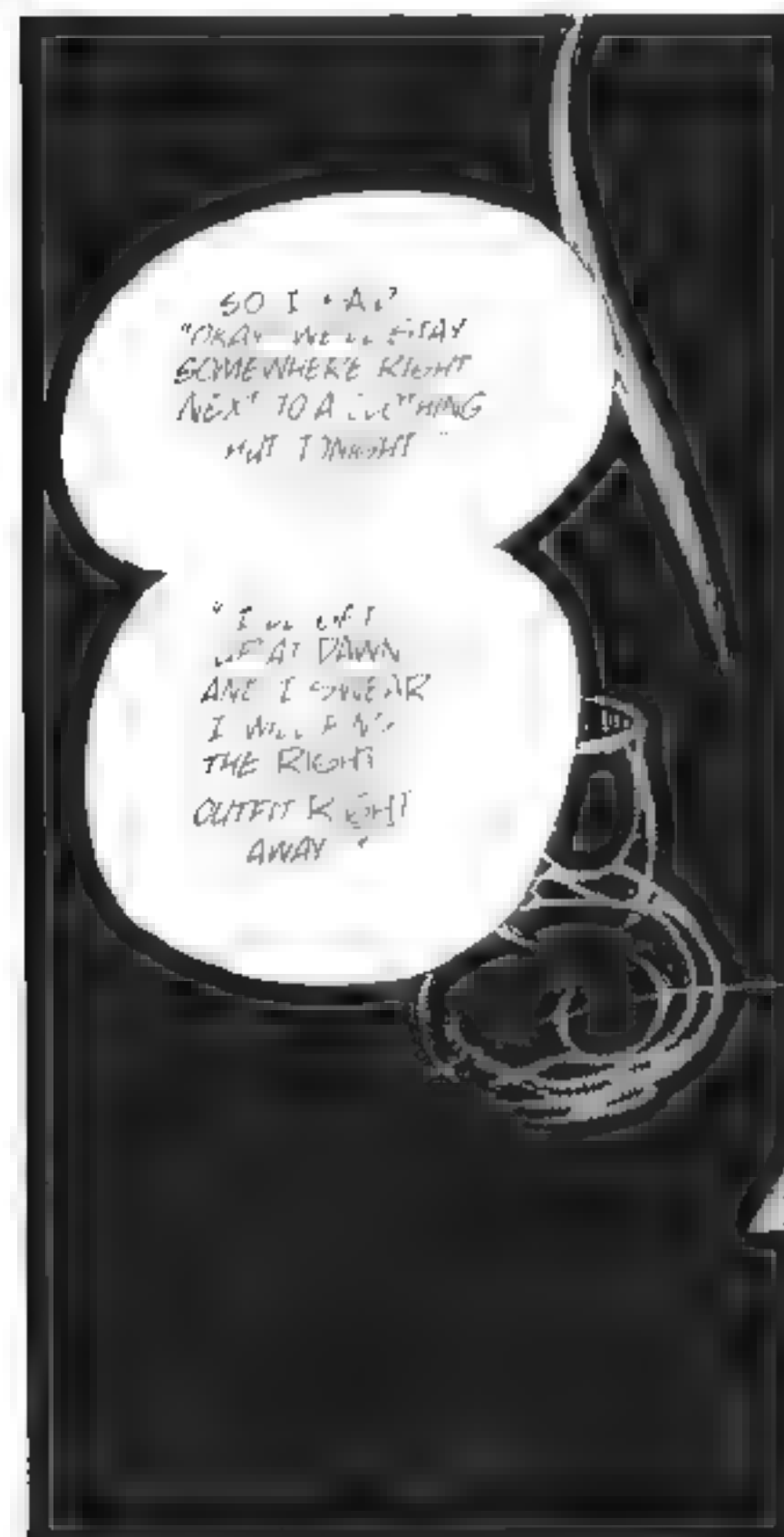
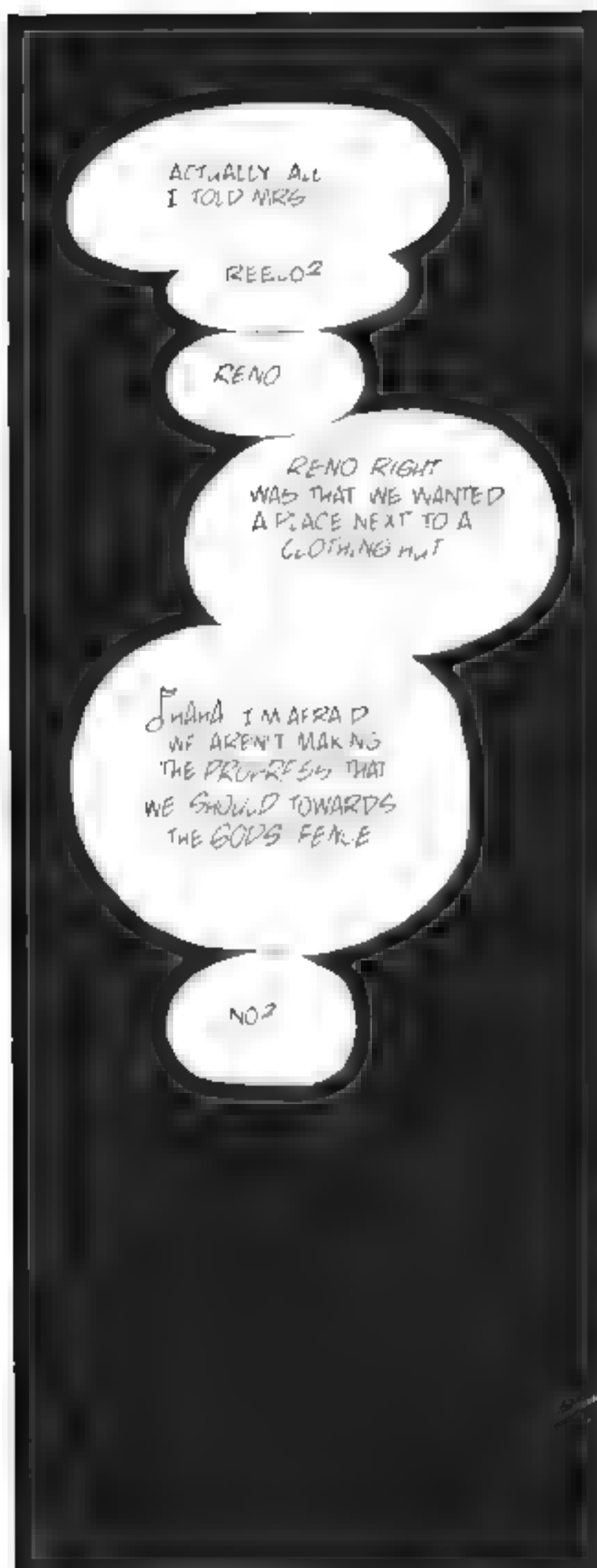


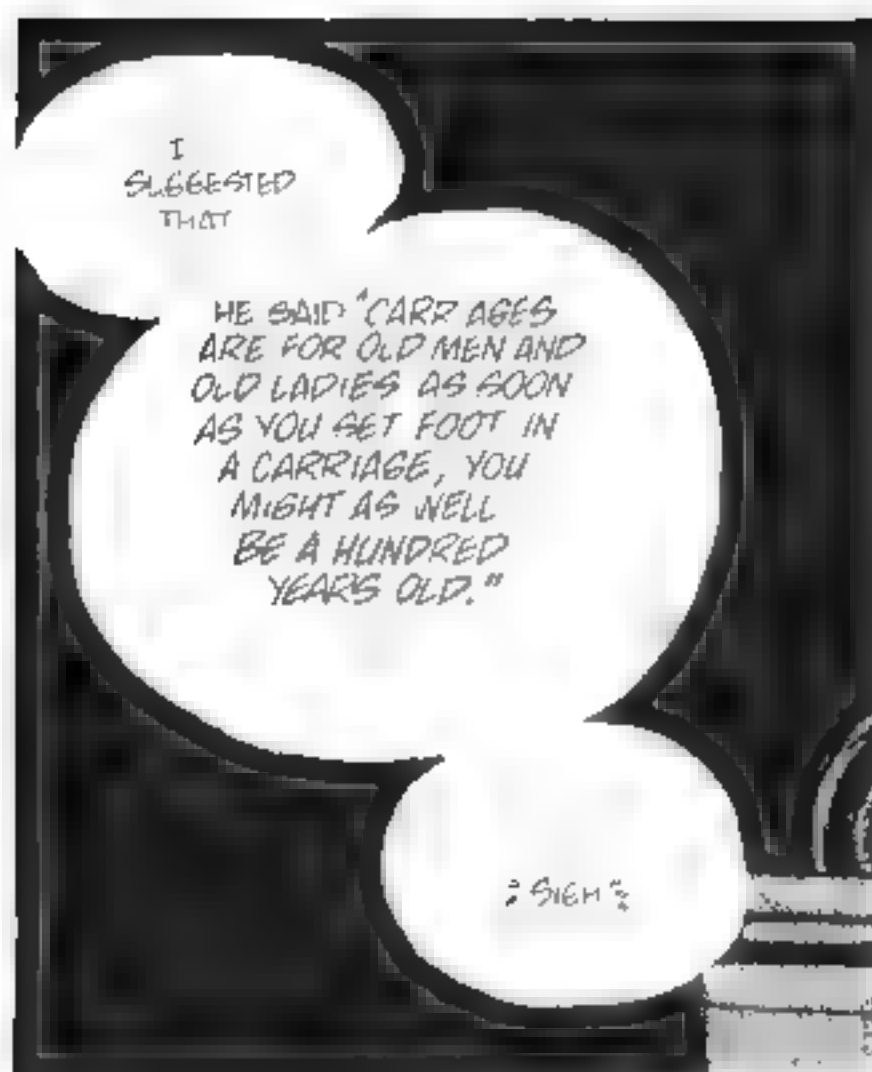






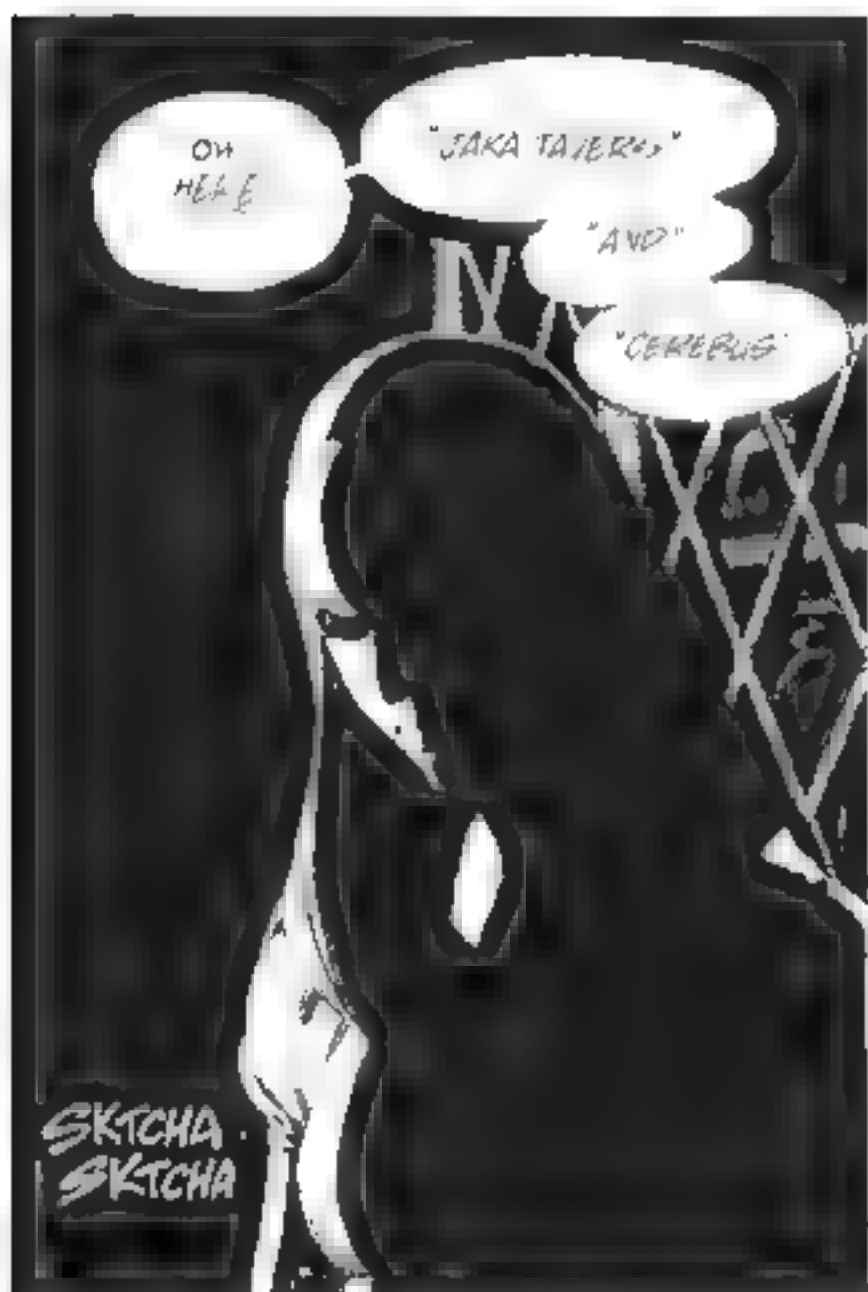
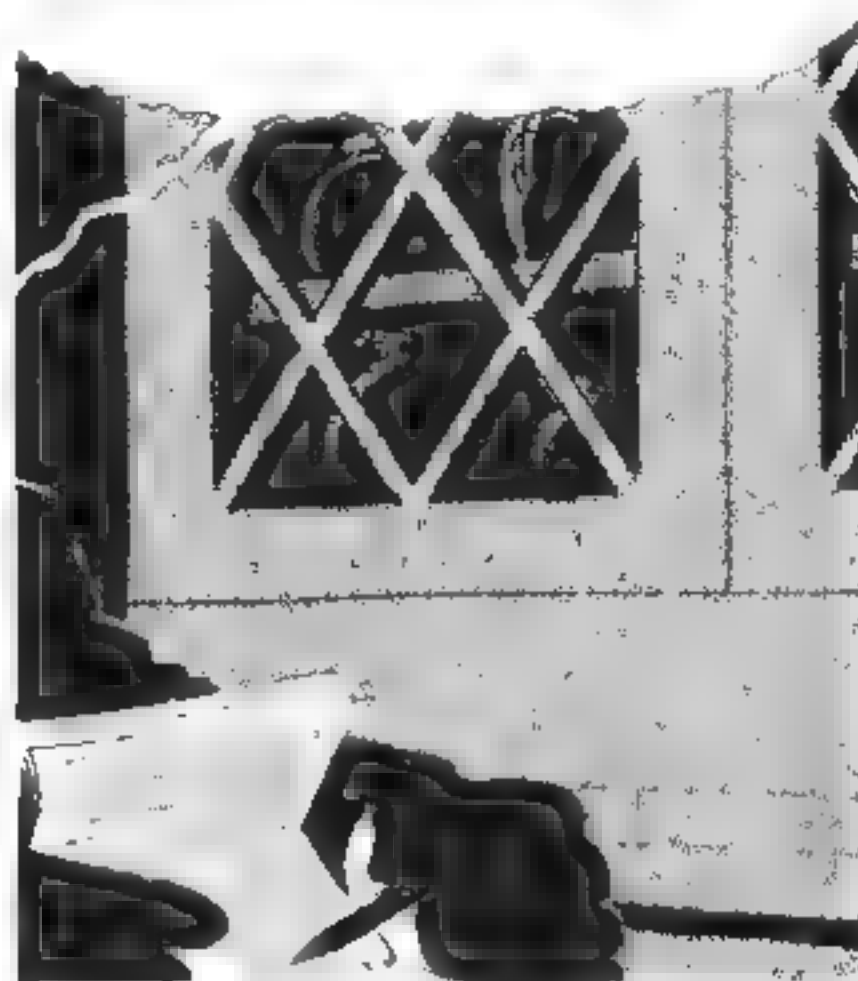


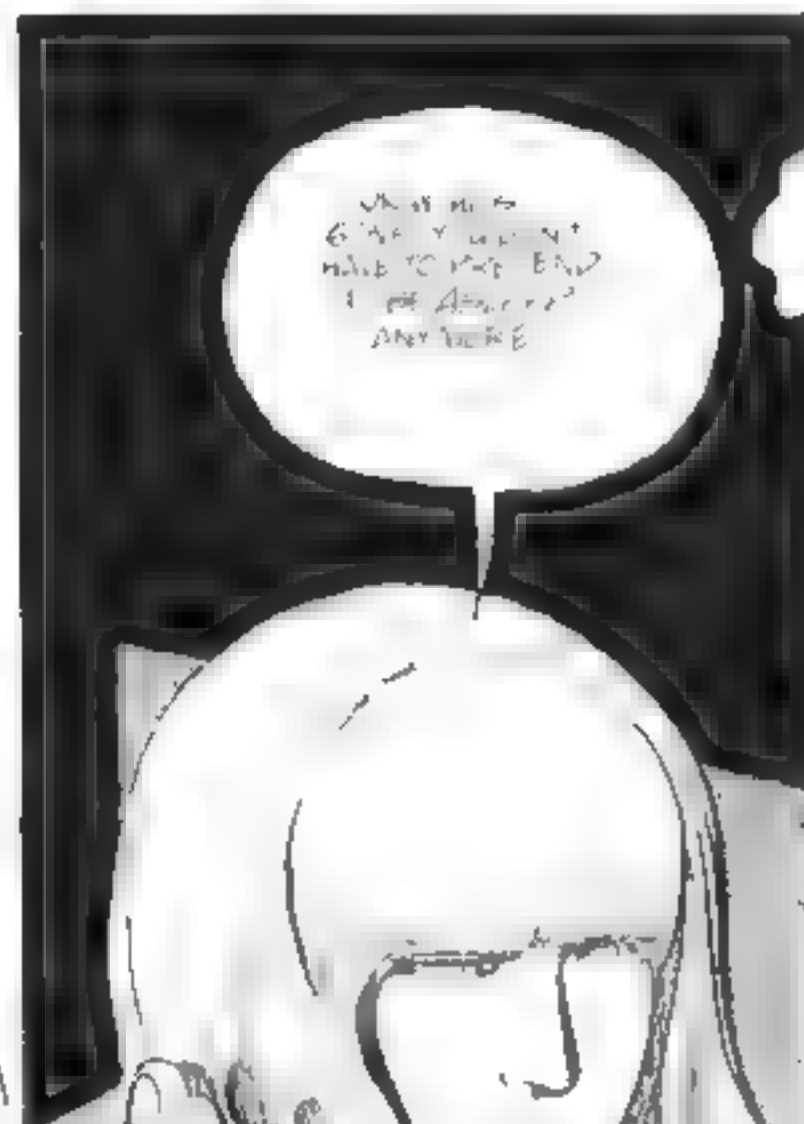






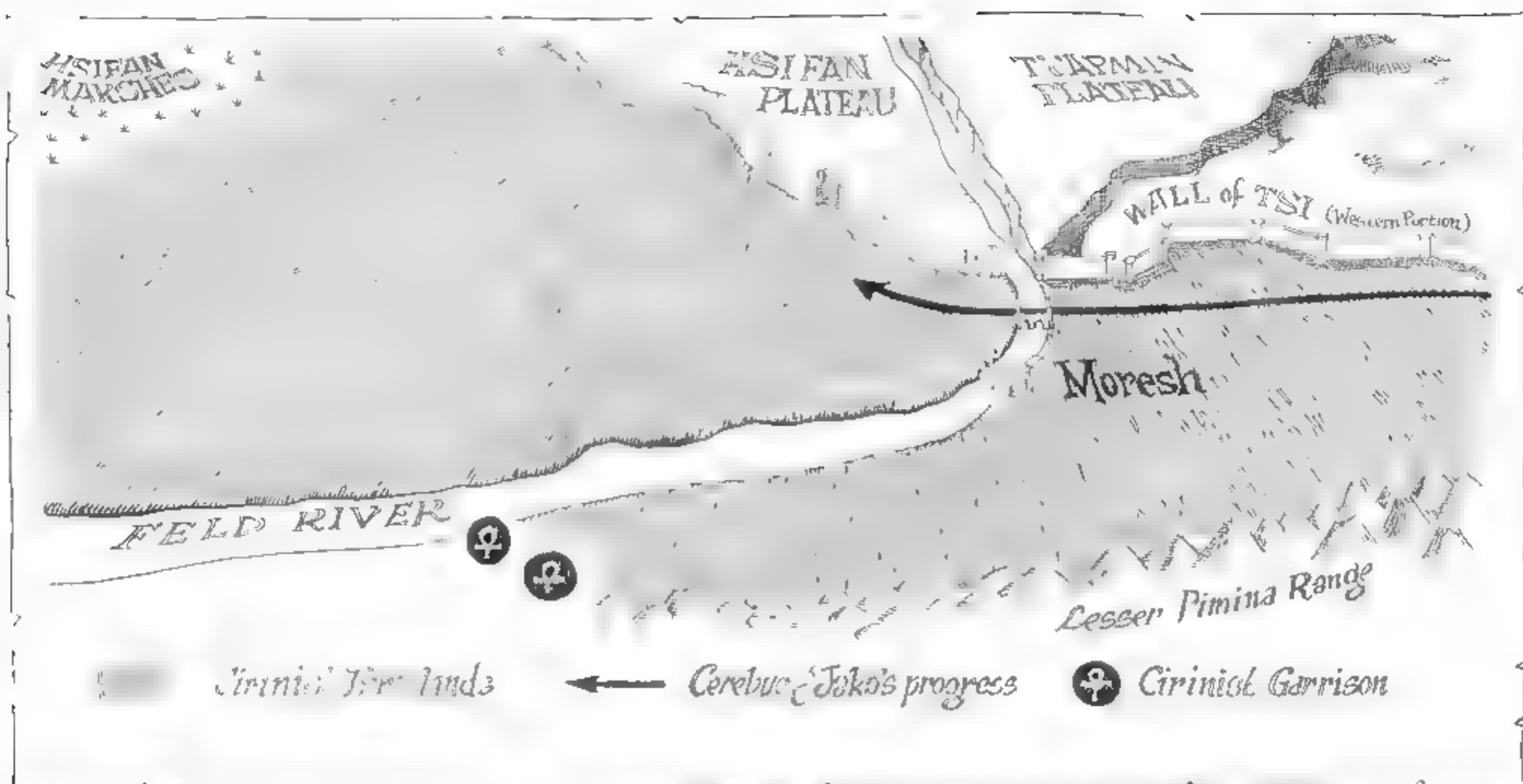
LESS THAN POOR" "POOR" ABOVE POOR" "LESS THAN GOOD" "GOOD" "ABOVE GOOD" "LESS THAN VERY GOOD" "VERY GOOD" "ABOVE VERY GOOD" "LESS THAN EXCELLENT" "EXCELLENT" OR "ABOVE EXCELLENT"





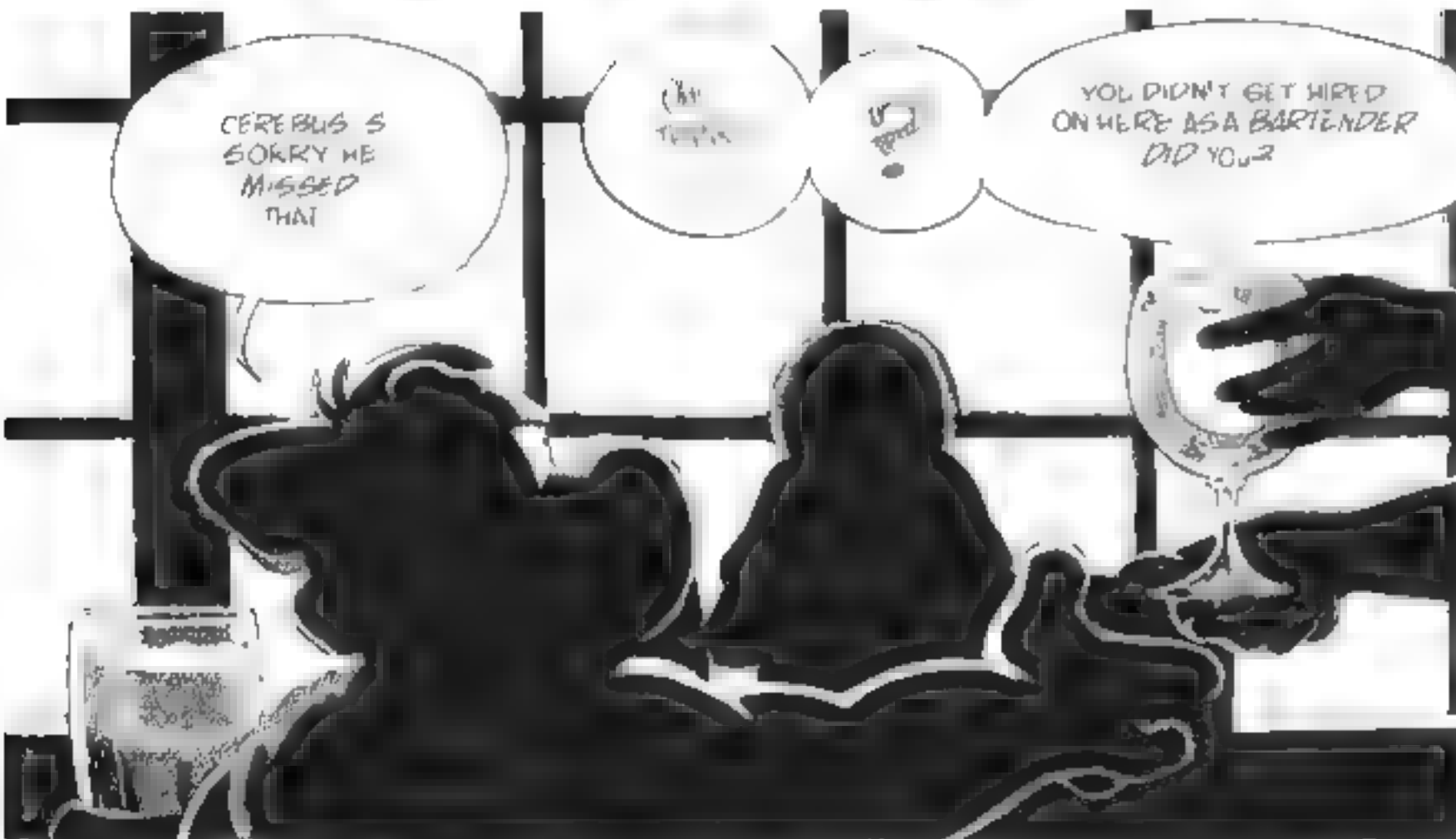
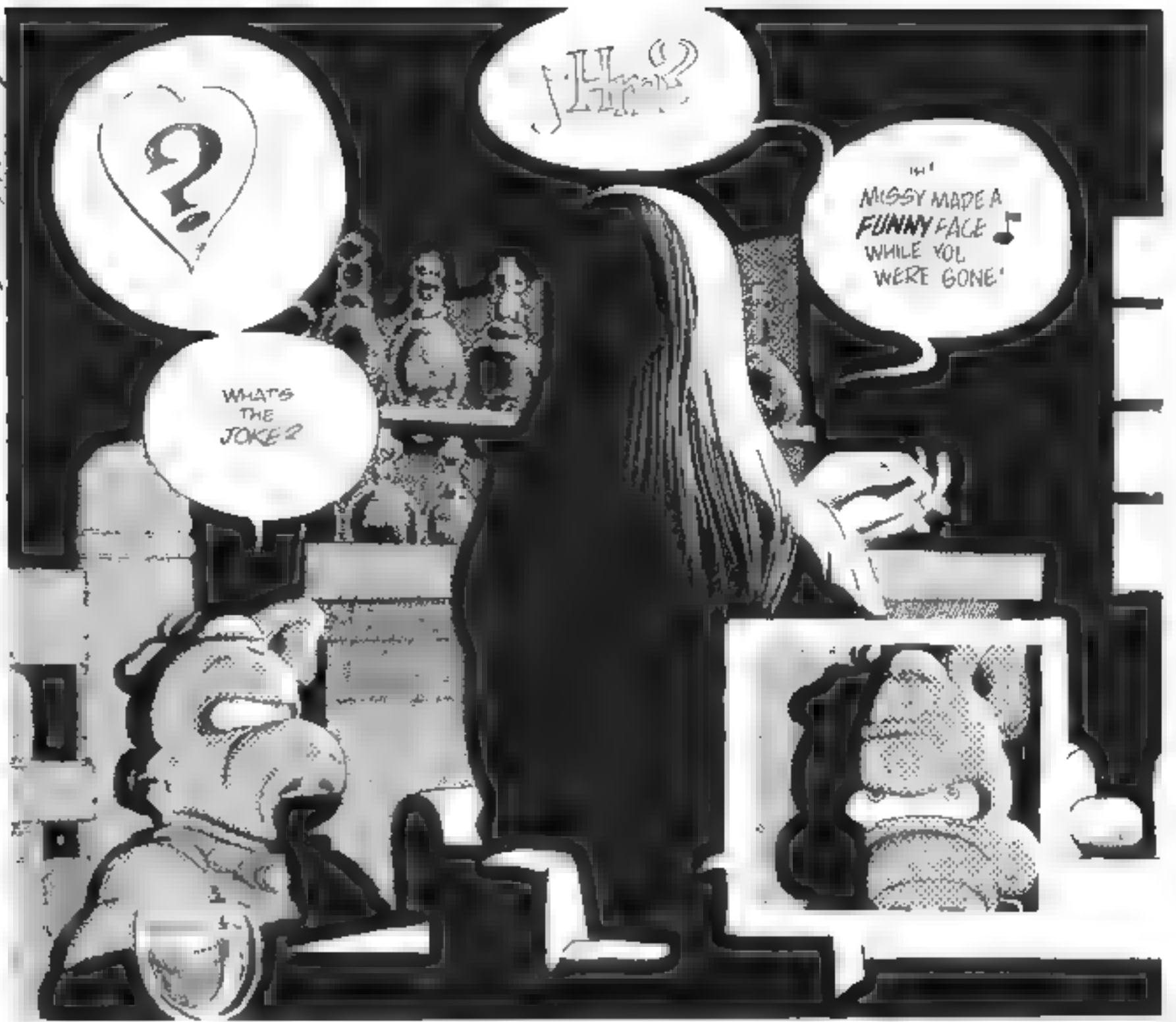




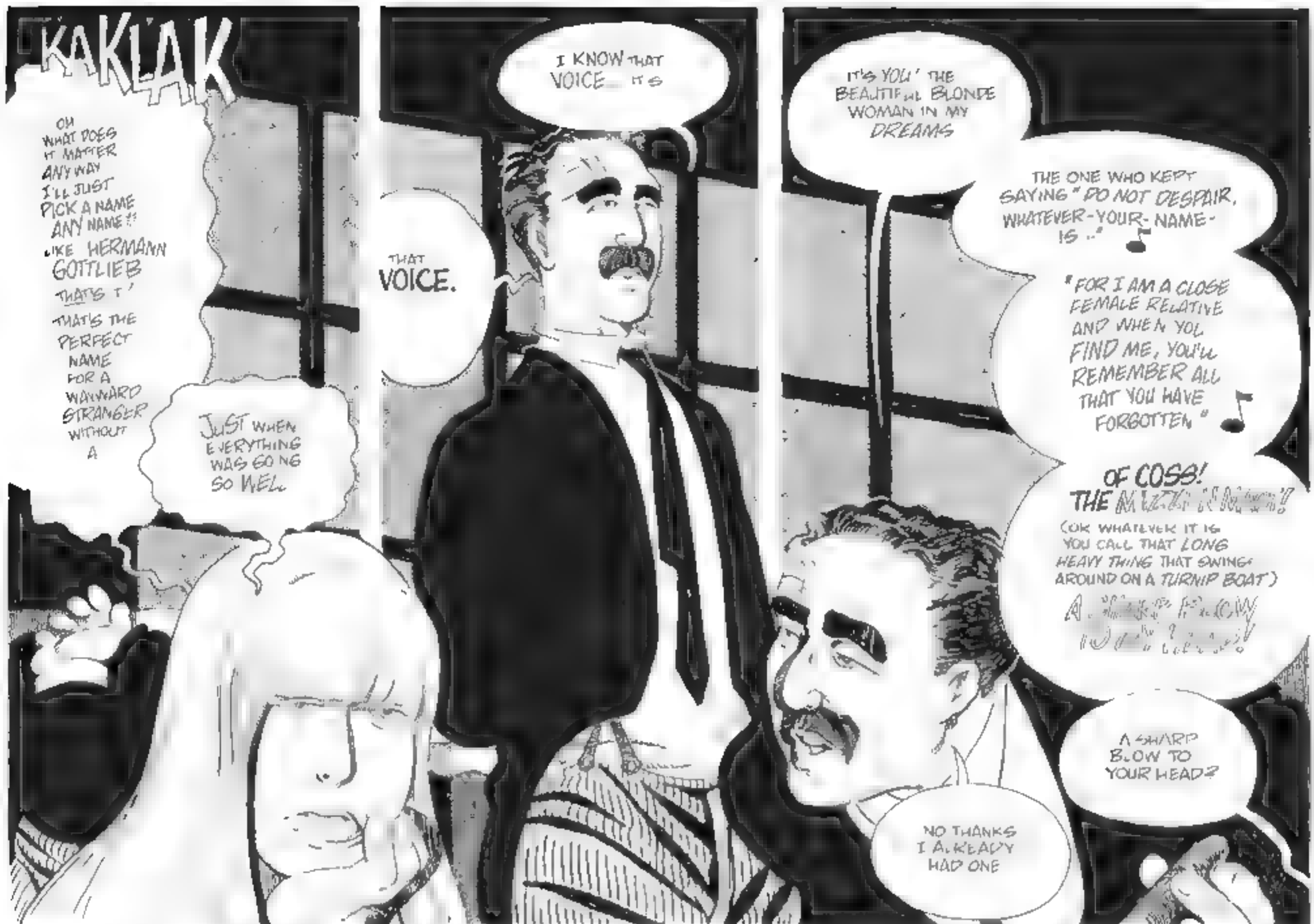




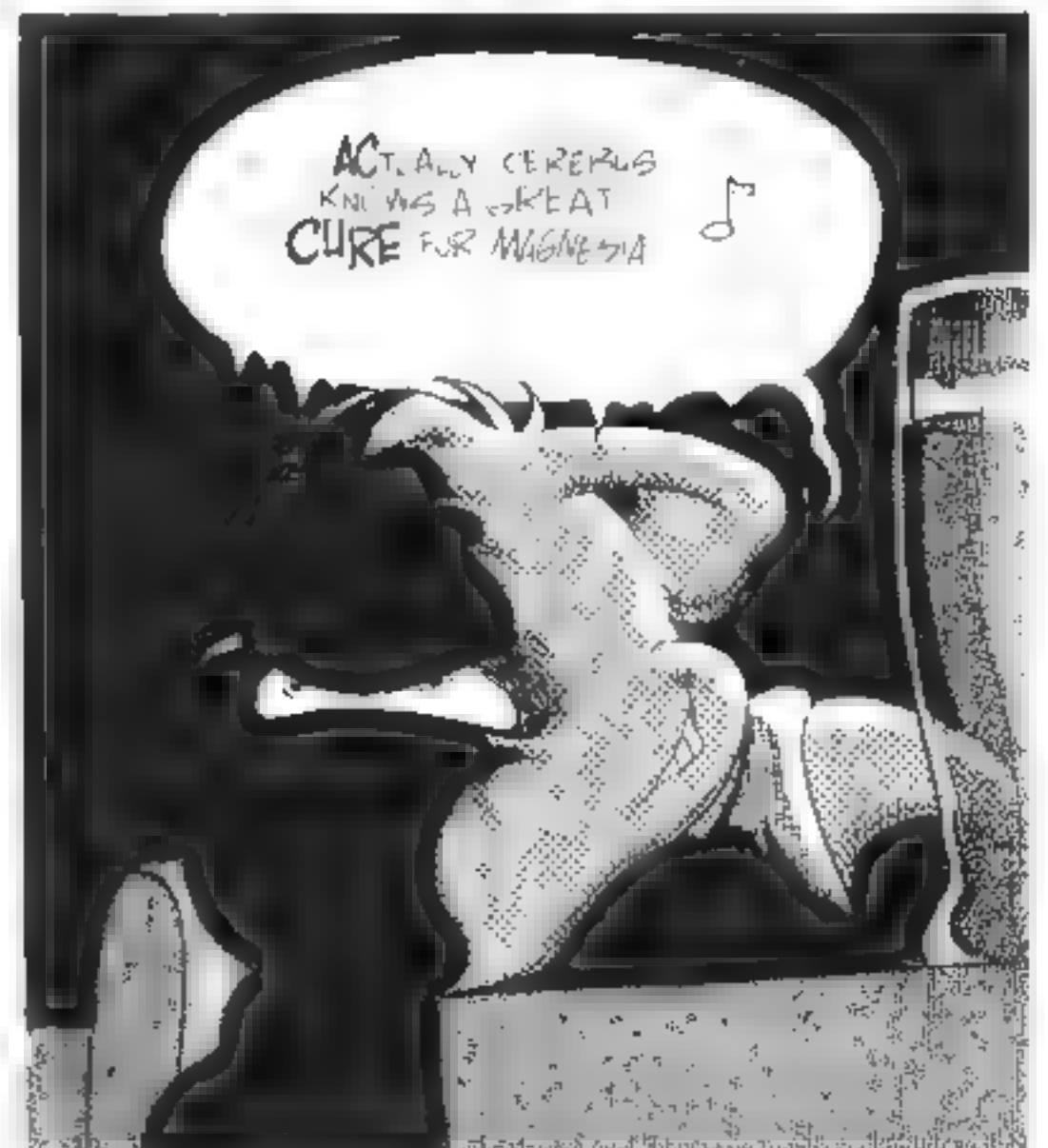
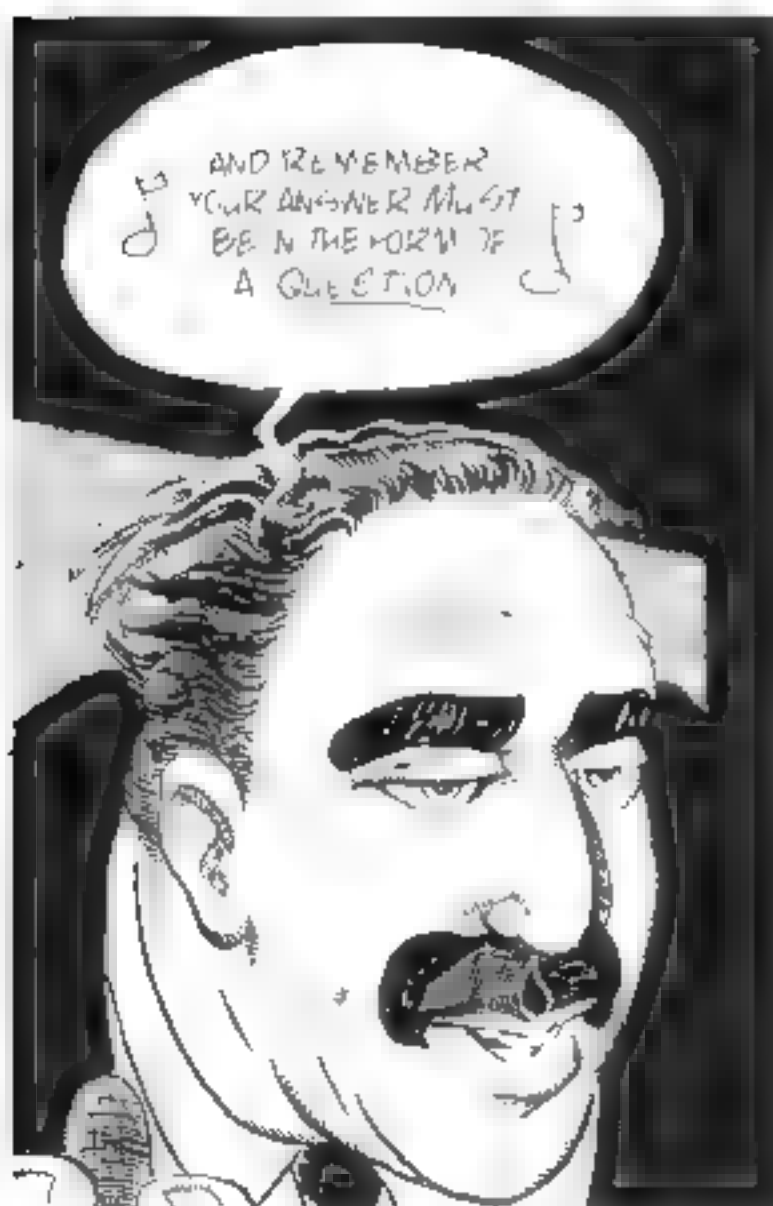




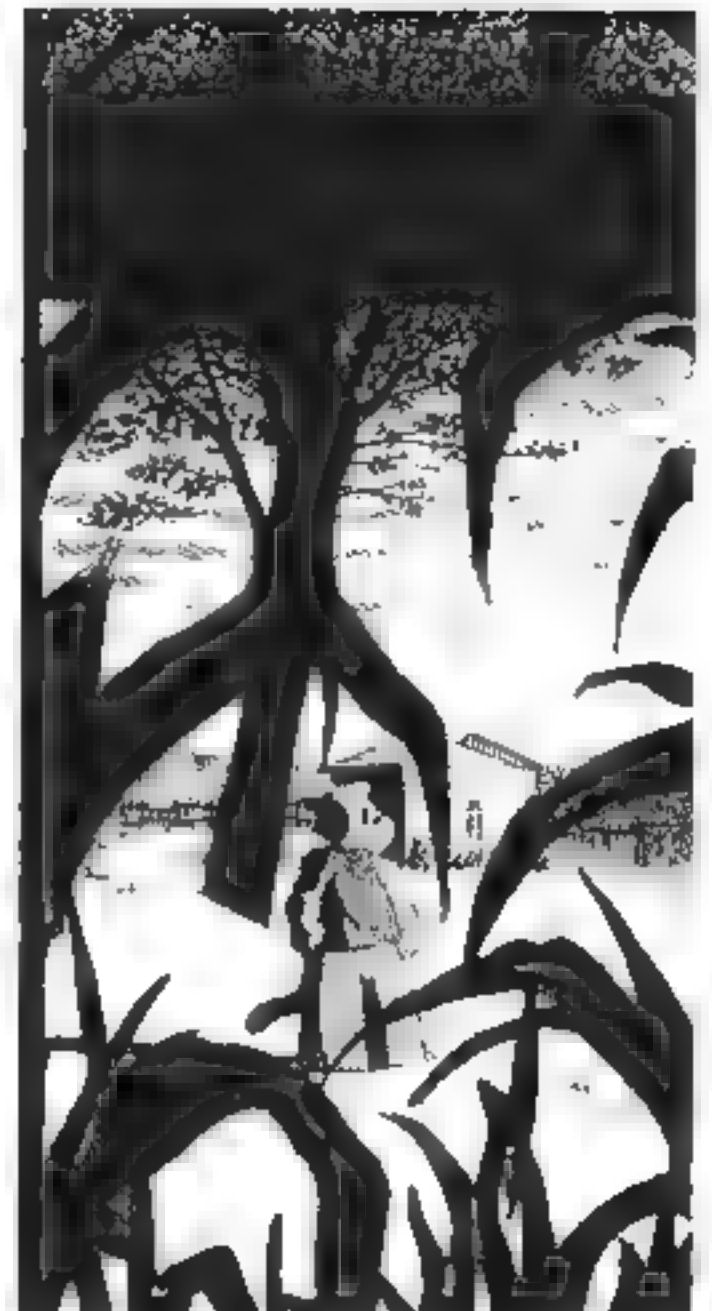






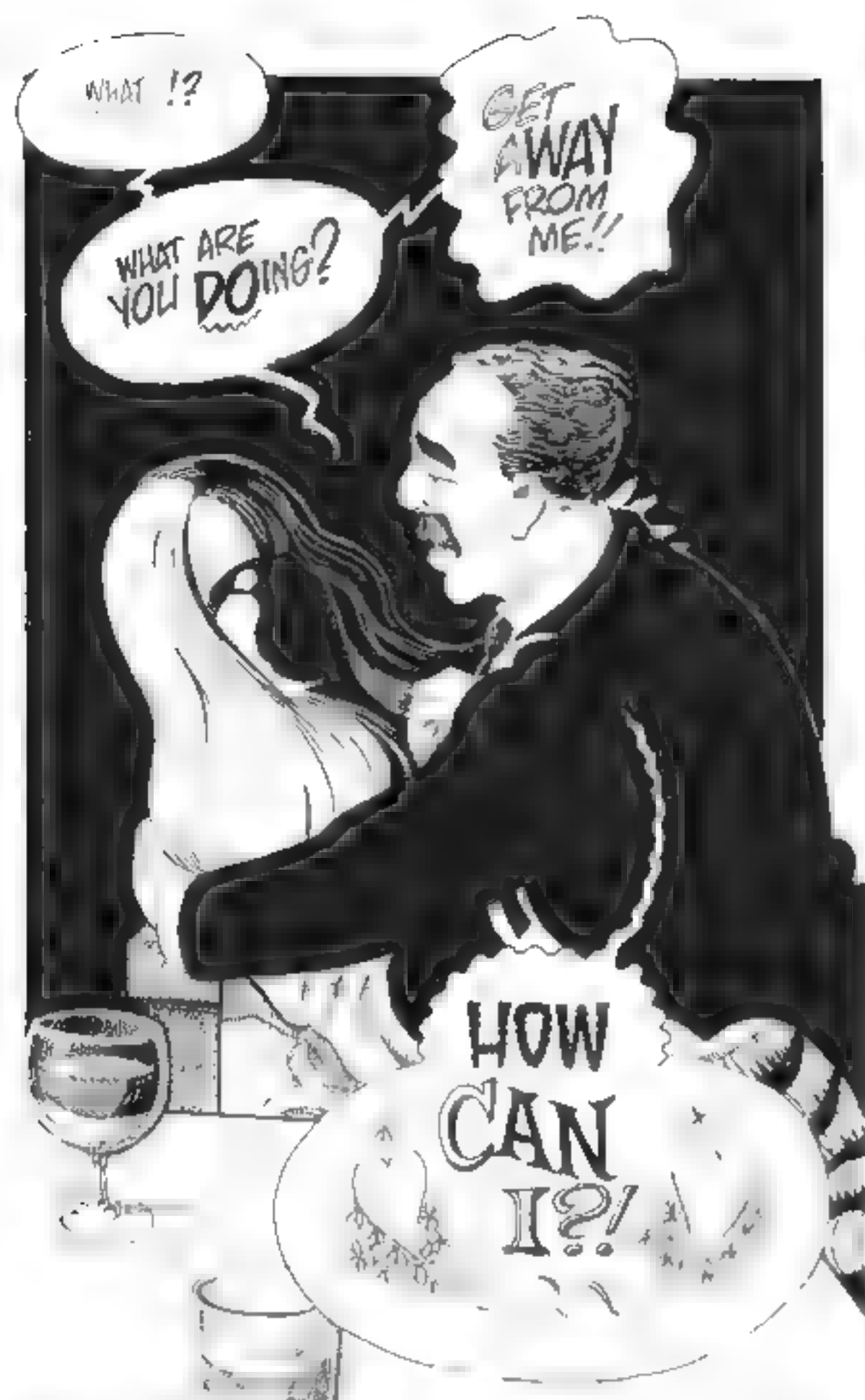






























SO SHE STARTS
TELLING ME "OH YOU
WERE SO NICE TO ME
WHEN I STARTED
DANCING"

"GIVING ME
ADVICE AND
ENCOURAGING
ME.."

AND I HAD JUST
BEEN LOOKING AT HER
AND THINKING "LADY,
YOU ARE TOO OLD TO
BE DOING THIS."



IF SHE WAS
TOO OLD THEN
WHAT WAS I?

YOU
SEE?

SO RIGHT THEN
AND THERE I DECIDED
I WAS GOING TO DANCE
FOR ONE MORE YEAR
-- AND THEN GIVE IT
UP FOREVER

JUST
LIKE
THAT

HA
HA
HA



WELL
APART FROM DRINKING
MYSELF STUPID EVERY
NIGHT FOR A MONTH
AND BITING EVERYONE'S
HEAD OFF WHO TRIED
TO TALK TO ME

HA

YEAH
"JUST LIKE
THAT"



SO WHAT DOES
THAT HAVE TO
DO WITH..?

OH, RIGHT, RICK! WELL
THAT WAS RIGHT AROUND
THE TIME I STARTED TELLING
HM EVERYWHERE AT
THE OLD DOOR MARKET,
IN THE TAVERNS, ON
THE STREET

EVERY TIME
I TURNED AROUND
IT SEEMED

BY
ACCIDENT..



JUST AN OLD, RAMSHACKLE
BUILDING -- PROBABLY RAT
INFESTED -- BUT, TO HIM IT HAD
ALWAYS BEEN THE CASTLE HE
WOULD OWN ONE DAY -- WHERE
HE WOULD LIVE WITH HIS QUEEN

AND THEN... THEN HE SAID SOMETHING
STRANGE... SOMETHING ABOUT HOW --
WHEN HE WAS JUST A BOY -- IT HAD
HAD A WONDERFUL PINK RADIANCE
TO IT

I LOOKED AT HIM
AS IF HE WAS INSANE
I MEAN -- WHO WOULDN'T?

WHEN HE SAW THE WAY I WAS
LOOKING AT HIM HE WASN'T EMBARRASSED
OR ANYTHING -- HE JUST SMILED "WHEN I
WAS YOUNGER," HE SAID, "EVERYTHING LOOKED
A LITTLE PINK TO ME..."

I LOOKED BACK
AT THAT OLD, RAMSHACKLE
BUILDING AND -- JUST FOR A
SECOND -- IT DID LOOK PINK AND
IT LOOK LIKE A TURRET
WITH A PINK BANNER FLUTTERING
OVER IT

THEN I
LOOKED BACK AT RICK
AND HE WAS STARING AT
ME -- AND HIS EYES WERE
THIS PALE, BRILLIANT
BLUE COLOUR

AND -- WELL -- I
WAS JUST DONE
FOR

A LITTLE TREMOR
WENT THROUGH ME
AND I JUST MELTED

JUST
LIKE
THAT

CA PINK



IF I HAD
THE POWER, I
WAS JUST BORED
OF THE WORLD
AND I HAD
NO ONE TO
SHARE MY VIBE

AS I HAD
LITTLE OF
AND MY OWN
DREAMS

AND I NEEDED
SOMEONE ELSE'S
DREAMS TO GRAB
ONTO

AND THE MORE
IMPOSSIBLE THE
DREAMS THE
BETTER

WE
SHOULD
BE GOING



OF COURSE WITH
RICK THAT'S ALL THEY
WERE DREAMS

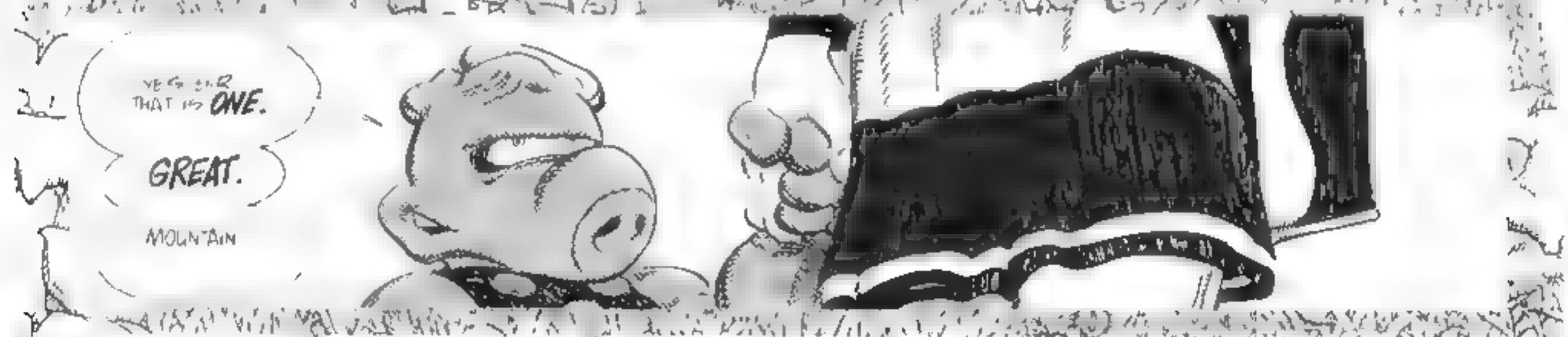
STUPID
CHILDREN

IMPOSSIBLE

DREAMS

AYE

RIP
GIRLY
BOY







CEREMAS
DIE IN
JET

WHAT IS
IT THAT WE
NEED

IT'S A BIG
PILE OF
ROCKS

MANY BIG
PILES OF ROCKS
-- ALL IN ONE
PLACE

MAYBE THAT'S
IT MAYBE CEREMAS
IS WORKING AT
THE WRONG
PLACE

THAT LEAD AND DOWN
FURT WHERE THEY'RE
ALL SORT OF LEAD AND
TO USE THEM

ALREADY GENT

IT'S JUST MAGNIFICENT
THE WAY THEY ALL --
ALL SORT OF

*

WHAT IS
IT THAT SHE
SEES?

IT'S A BIG
STUPID PILE
OF ROCKS

IT'S NOT
EVEN A REAL
MOUNTAIN
ANYMORE

THIS
RATE

BY THE
TIME WE
GET TO THE
GODS
FENCE

IT'LL TAKE
US TWO DAYS
TO GO HALF
A MILE!!

OH LOOK
AT THAT ONE
OH AND
THAT ONE

CARE...

OH
HUH!!



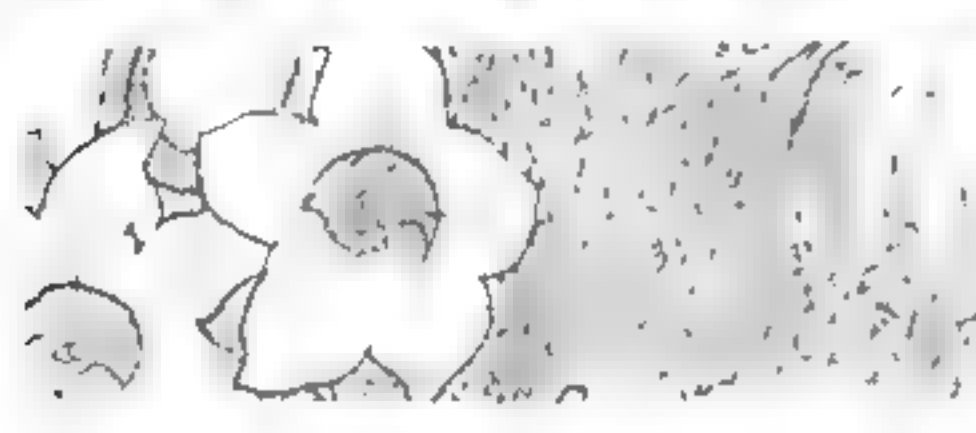
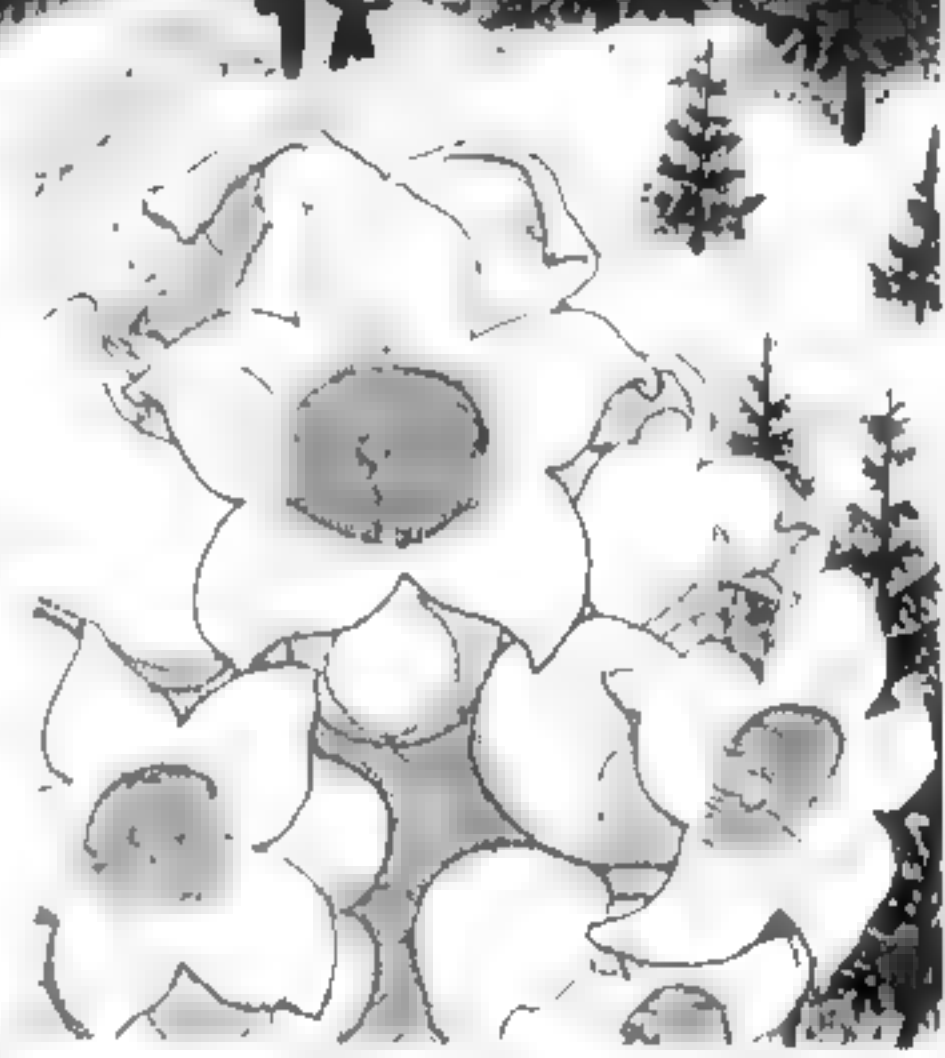
OKA

THEY WITH
THEY WHO
AFTER
NOT THE
WILL I

HUH!
CEREBUS WAS
JUST THINKING
THE

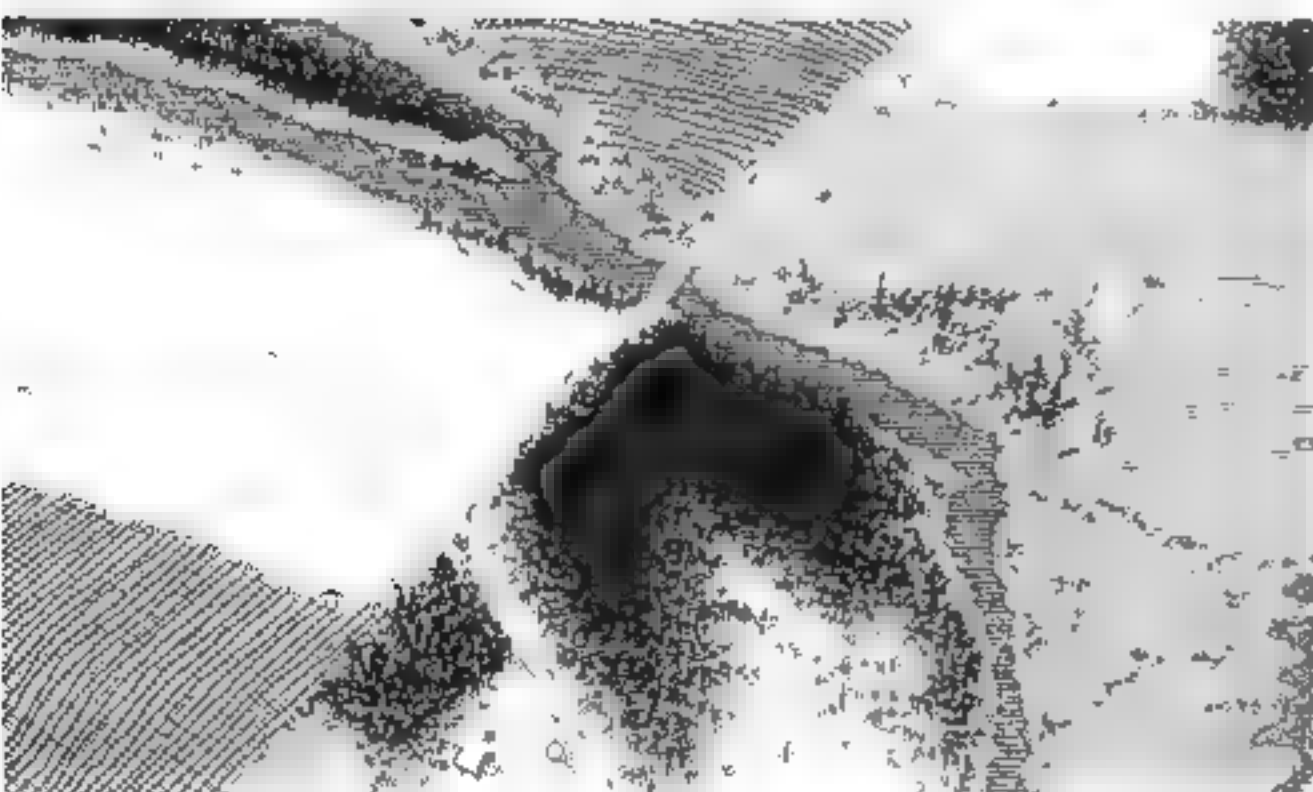
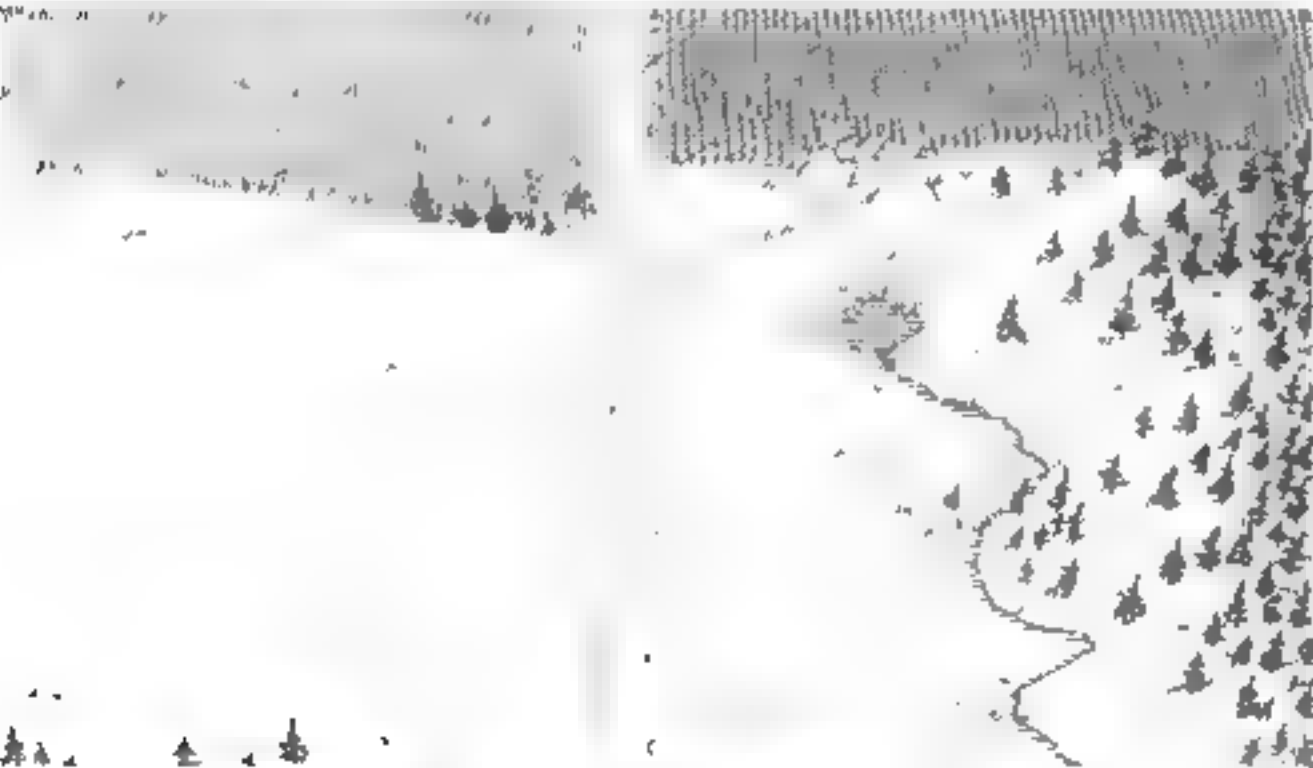
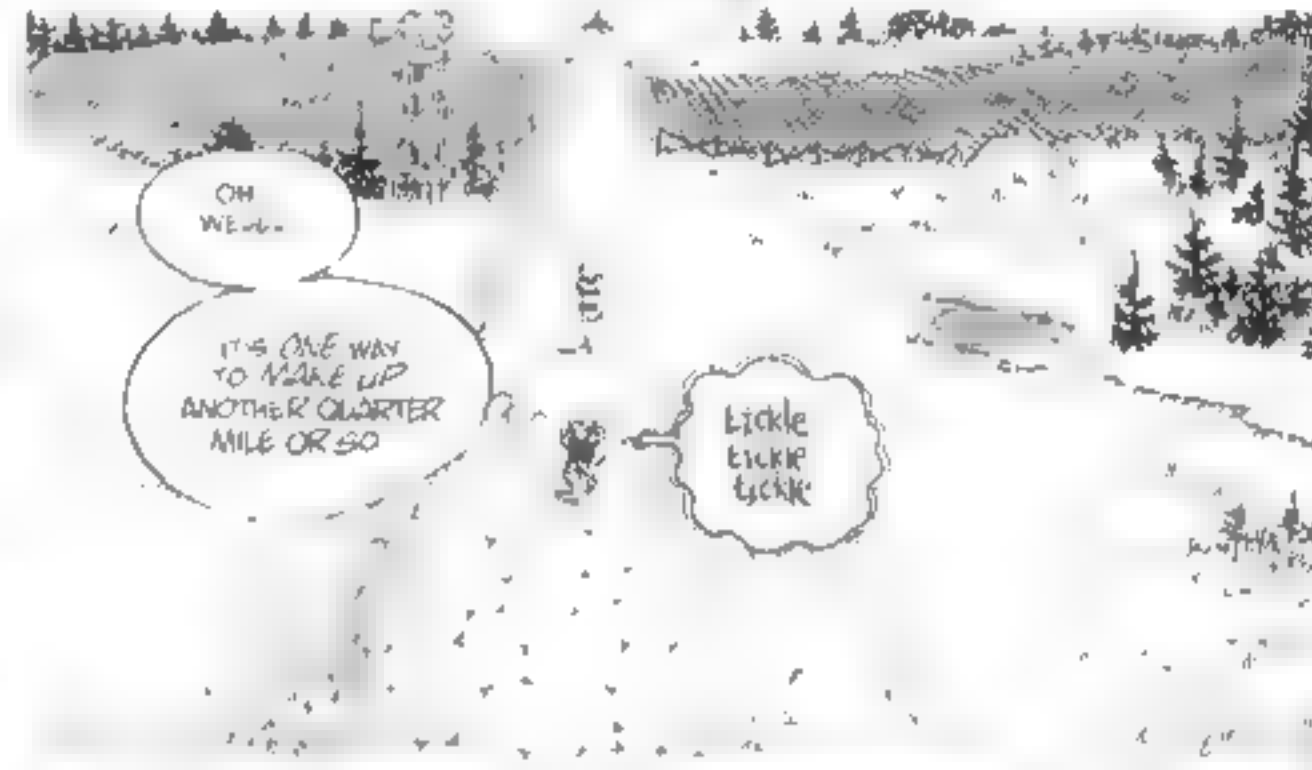


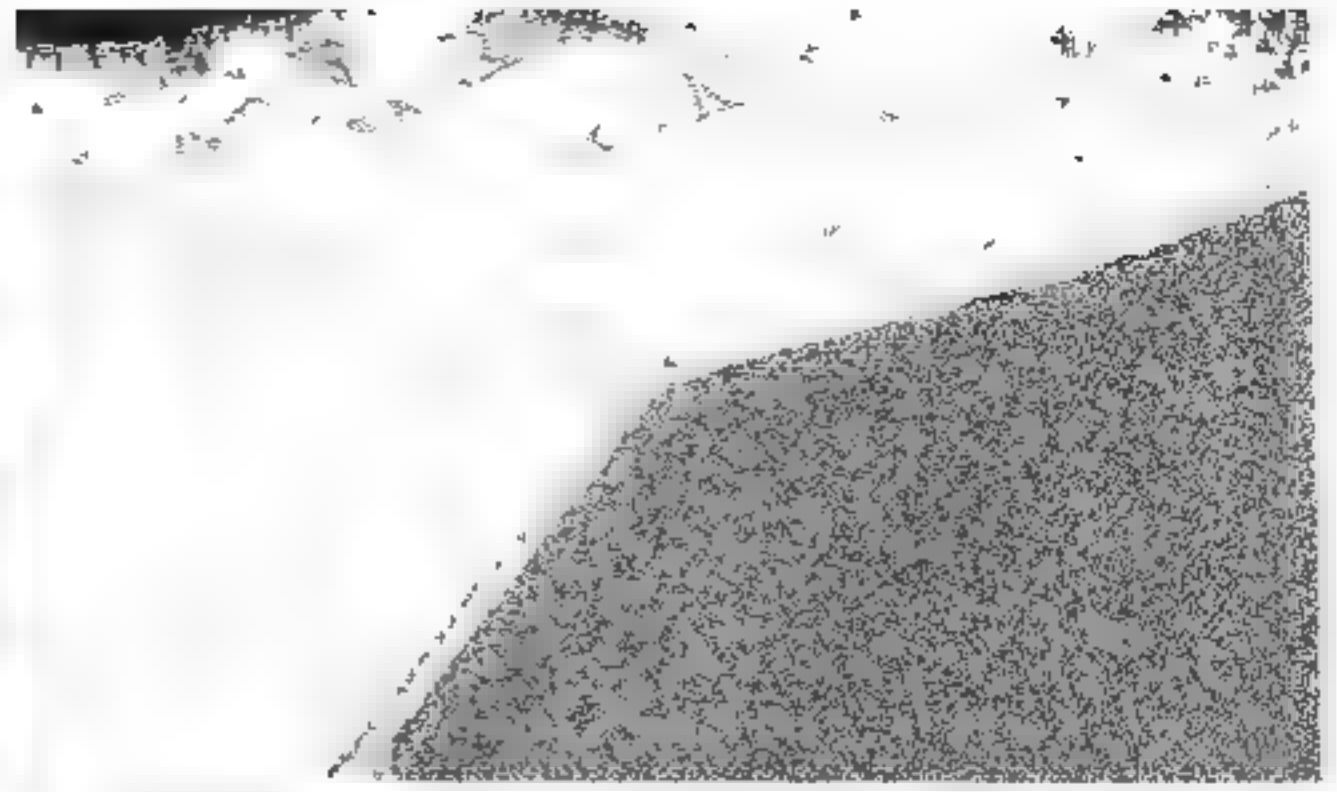
UH
HUH
FNE











?





~~~~~

WE GO

RIGHT

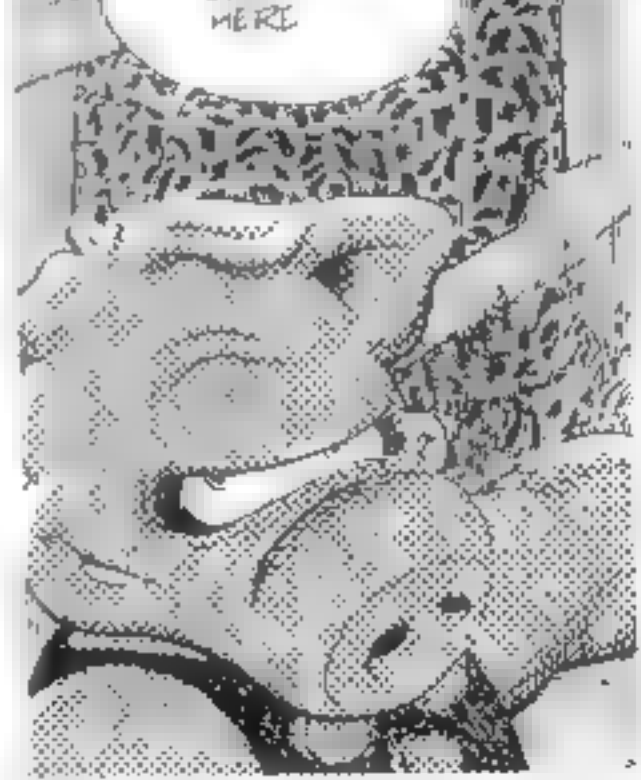
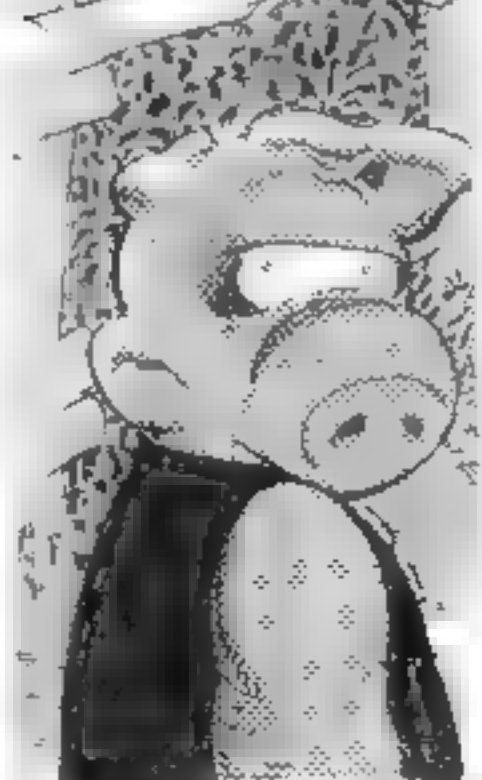
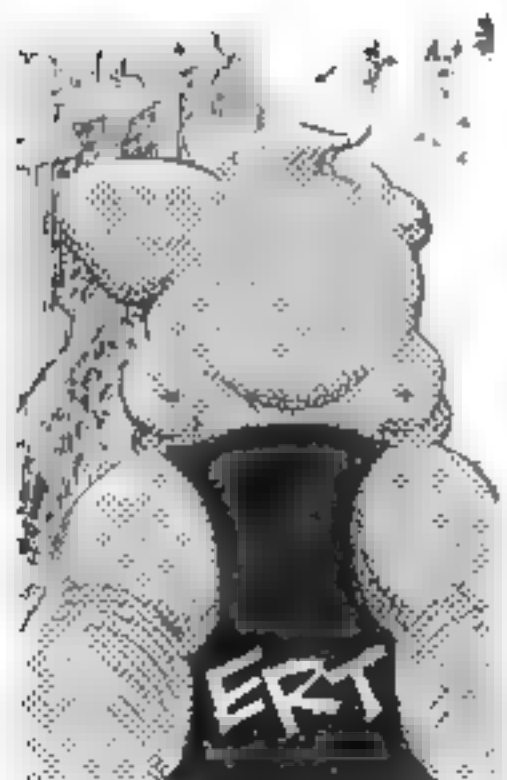
HERE

hen  
JAKA

CEREBUS KNOWS  
THIS ROAD LIKE  
THE BACK OF HIS  
HAND

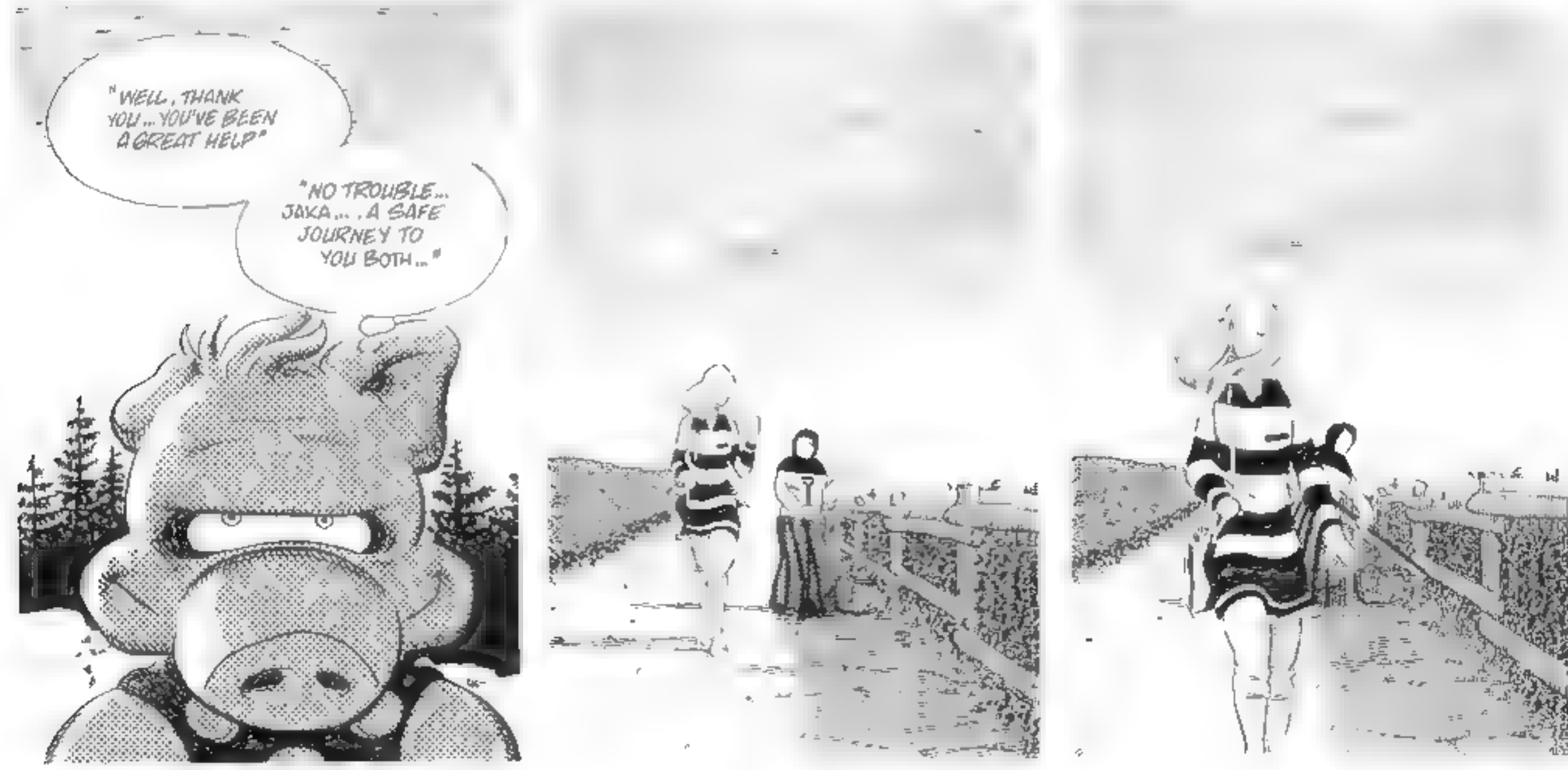
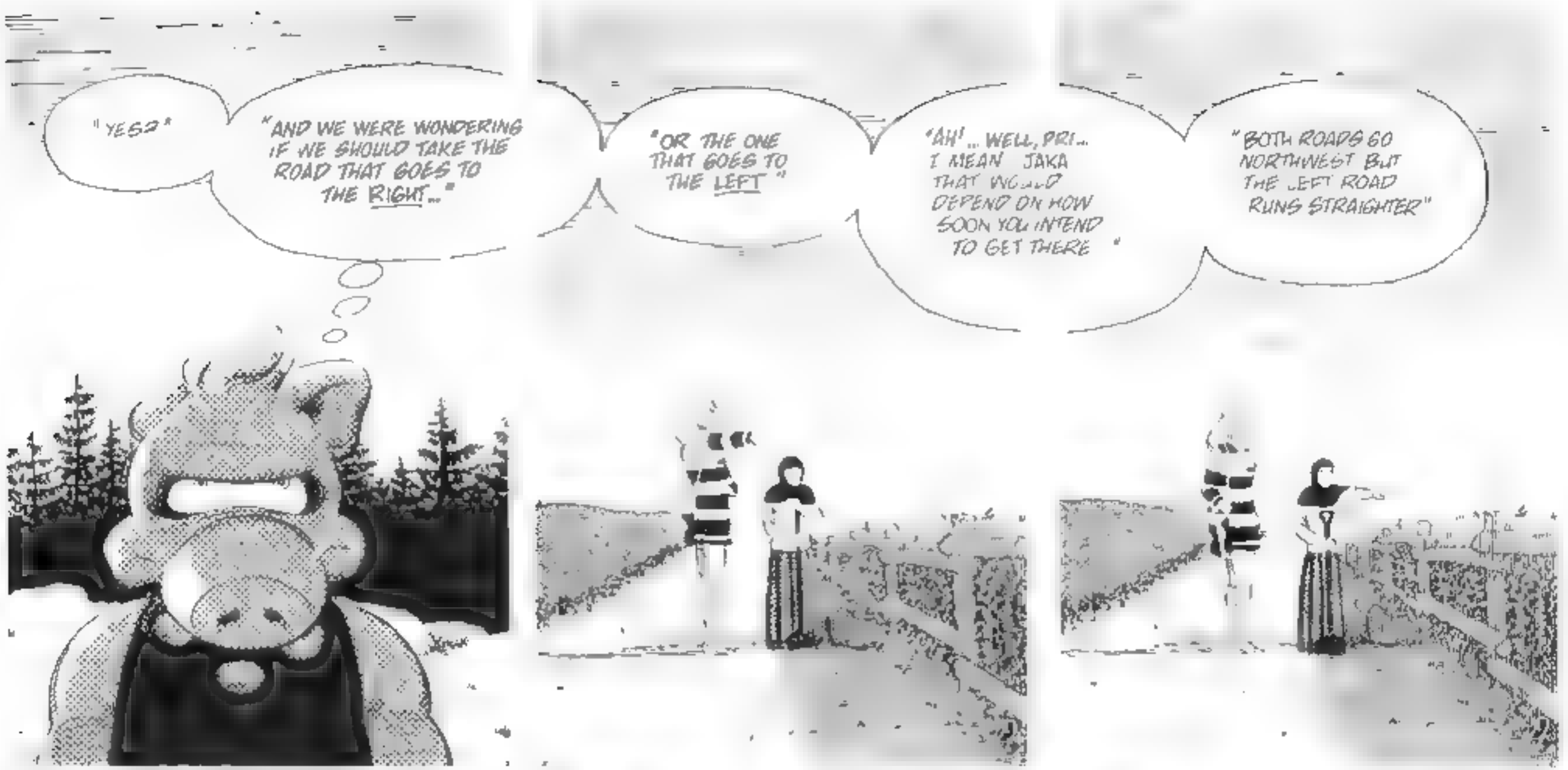
WE GO  
LEFT  
HERE

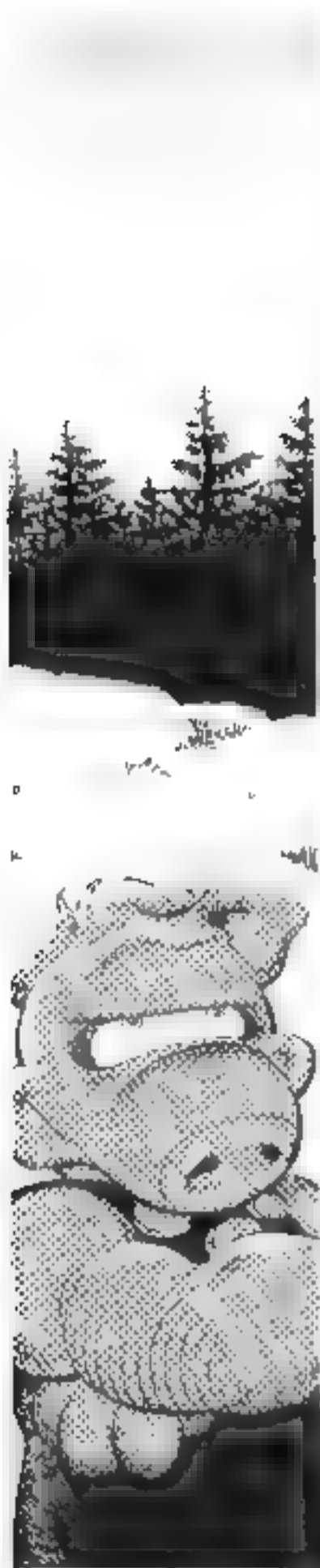
WHAT











ALL OF THE PUBS  
AND TAVERNS ON THE  
LEFT ROAD WERE  
TORN DOWN SO THEY  
COULD WIDEN IT

IT'S BASICALLY JUST  
A SUPPLY ROUTE FOR  
DISTRICTS TWO AND  
THREE NOW



TORN  
DOWN!?

THAT'S  
WHAT SHE  
SAID



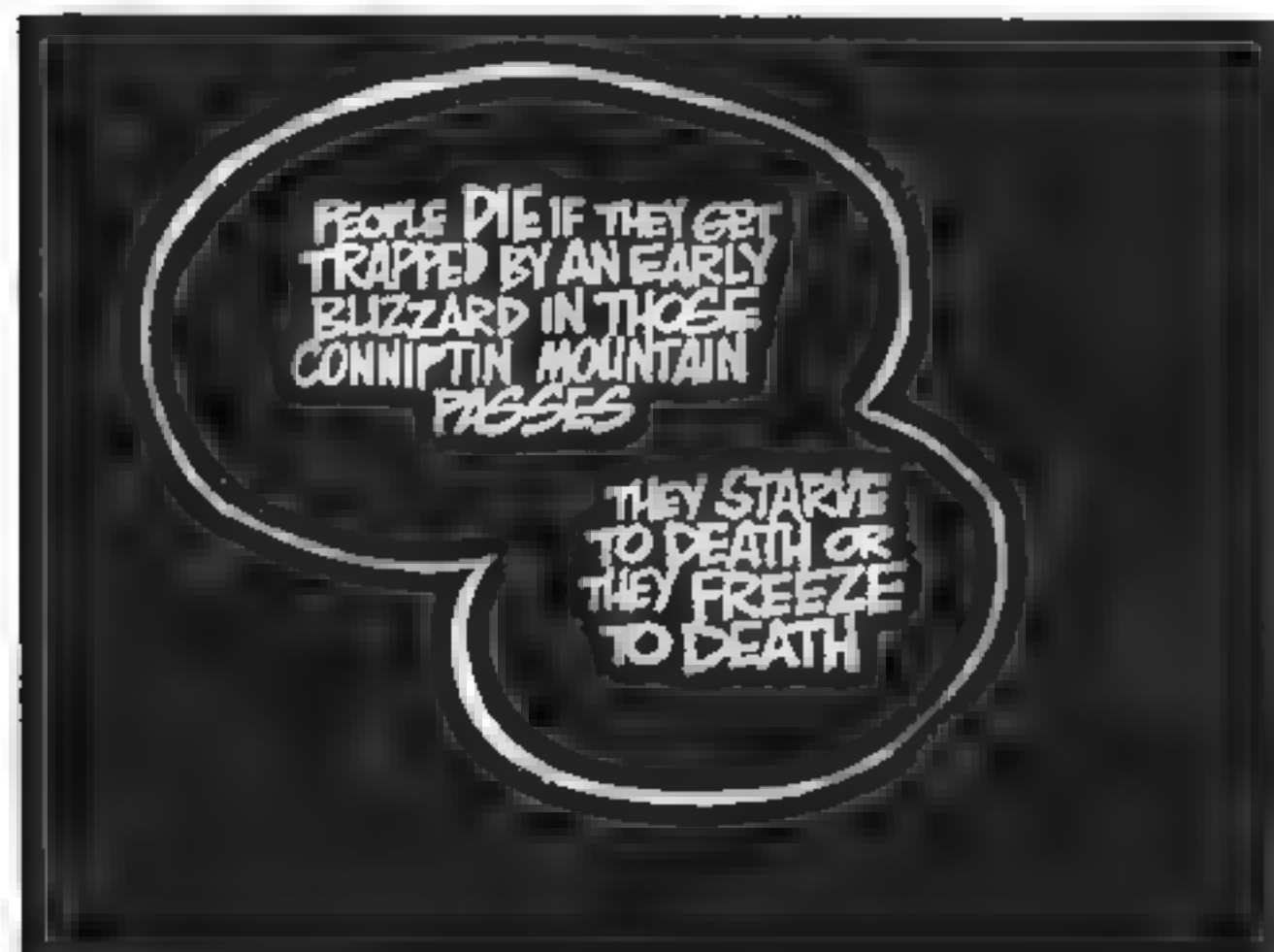
THOSE  
WERE SOME  
OF THE BEST  
PUBS AND  
TAVERNS  
IN  
ESTARCION  
!

WHOSE STUPID  
IDEA WAS  
THAT?!

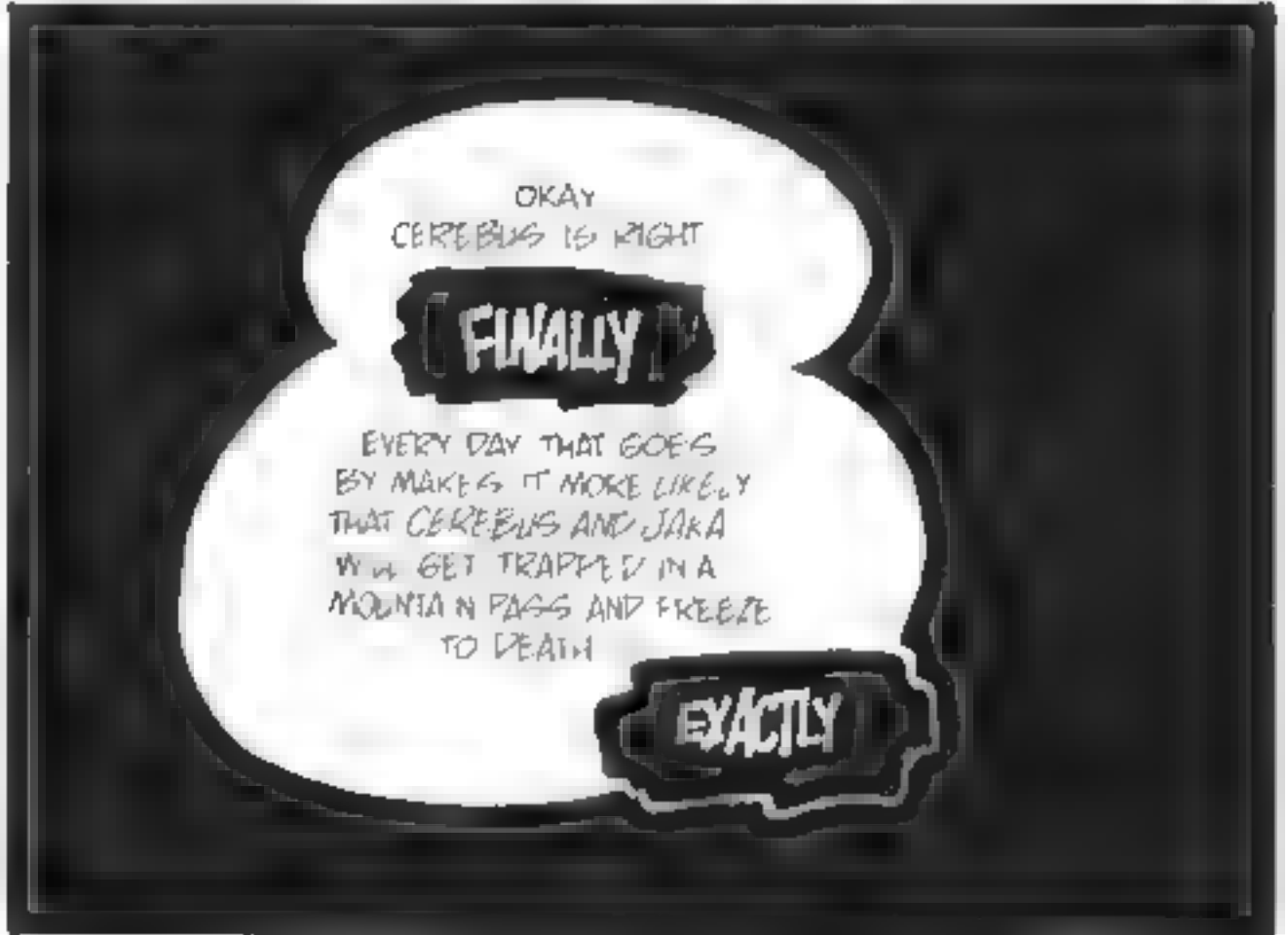
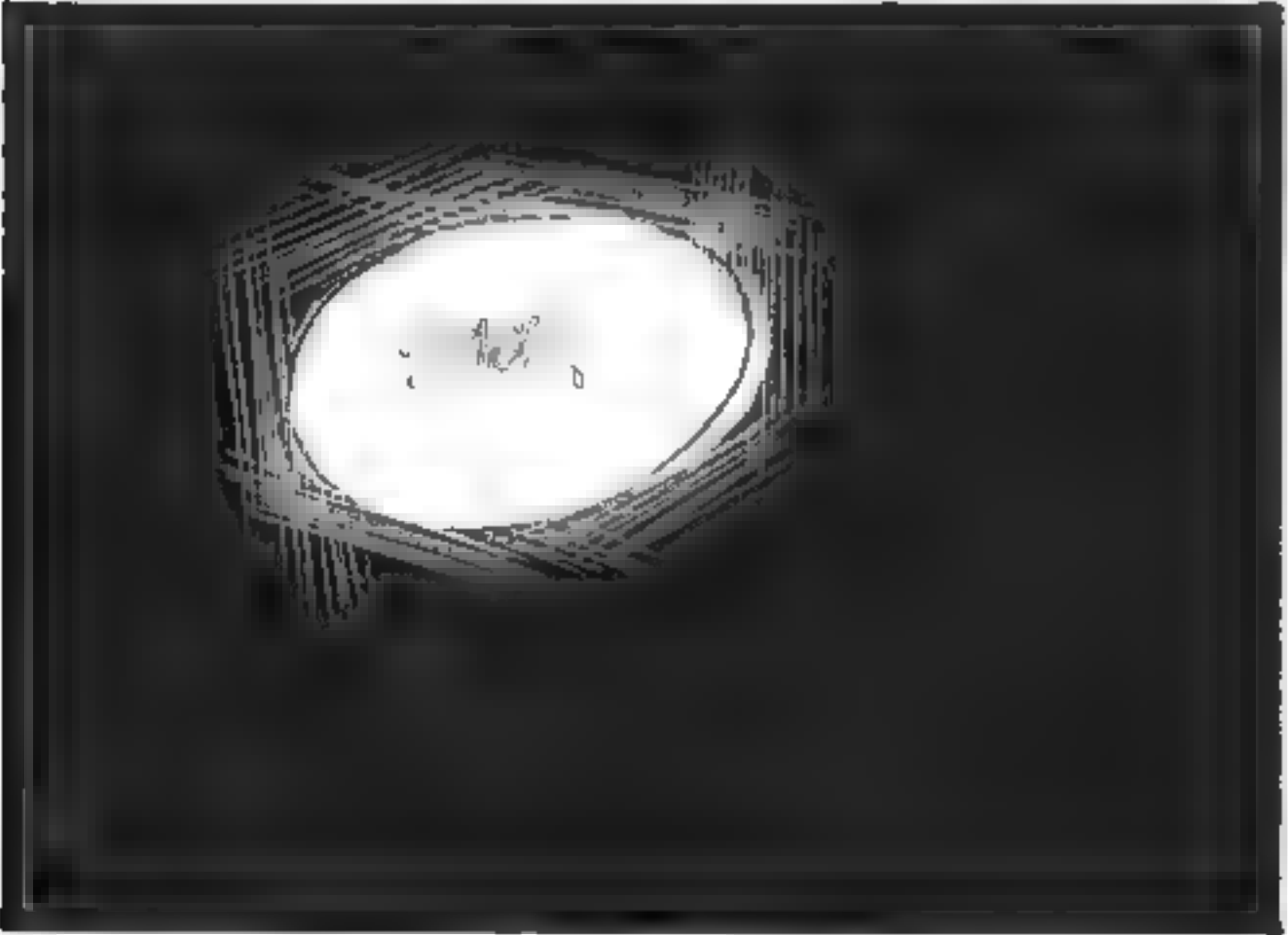
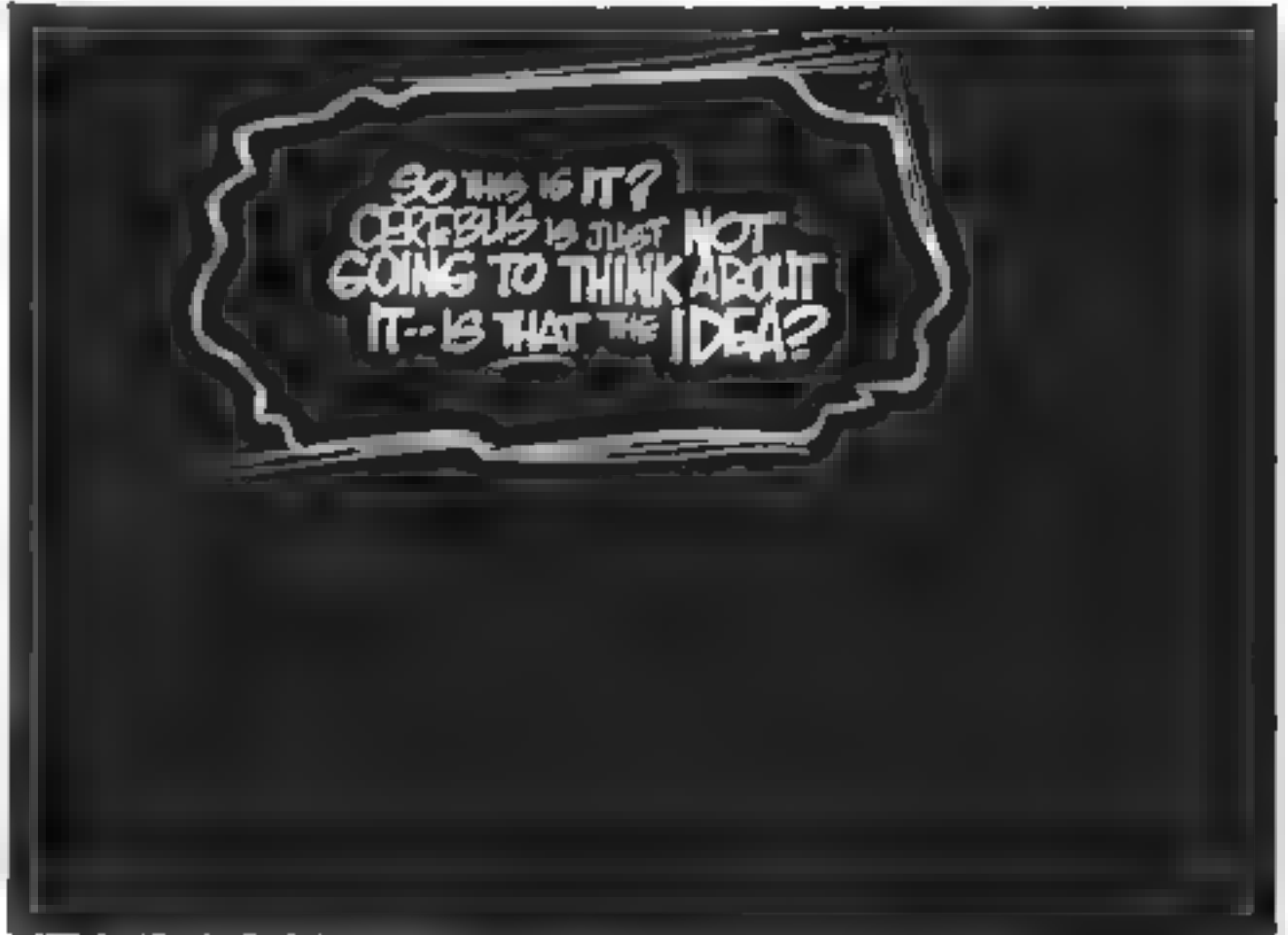


WELL DON'T  
LOOK AT ME,  
MON

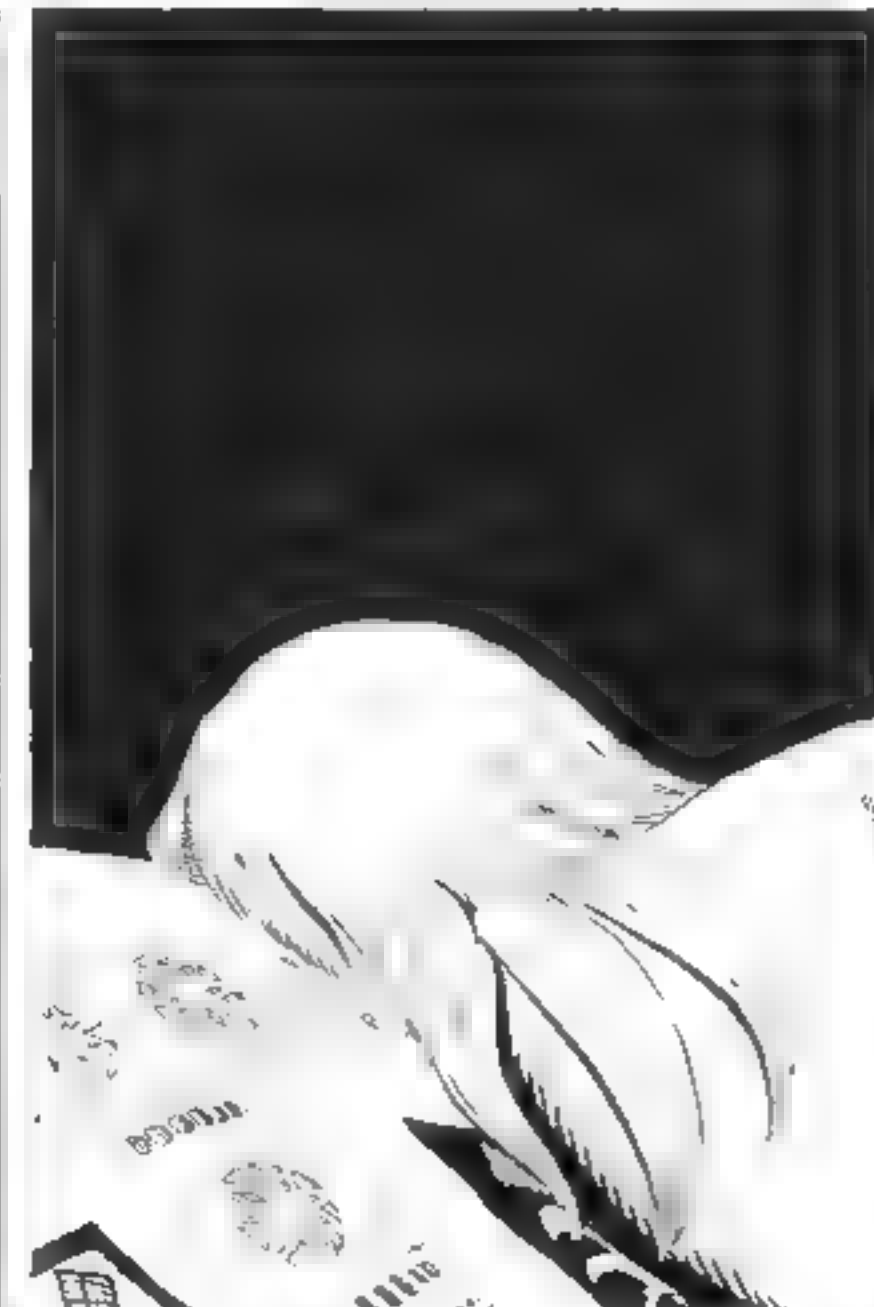
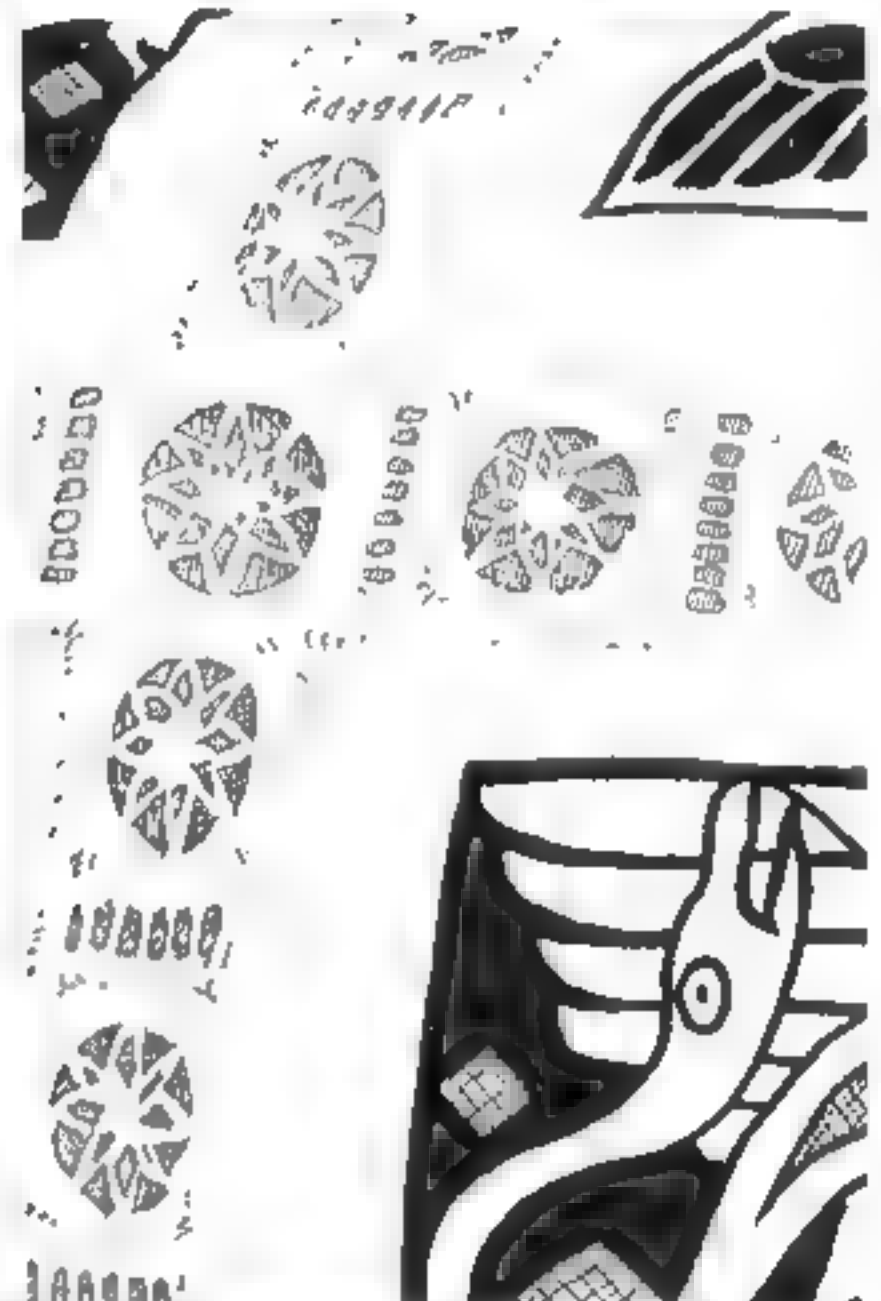
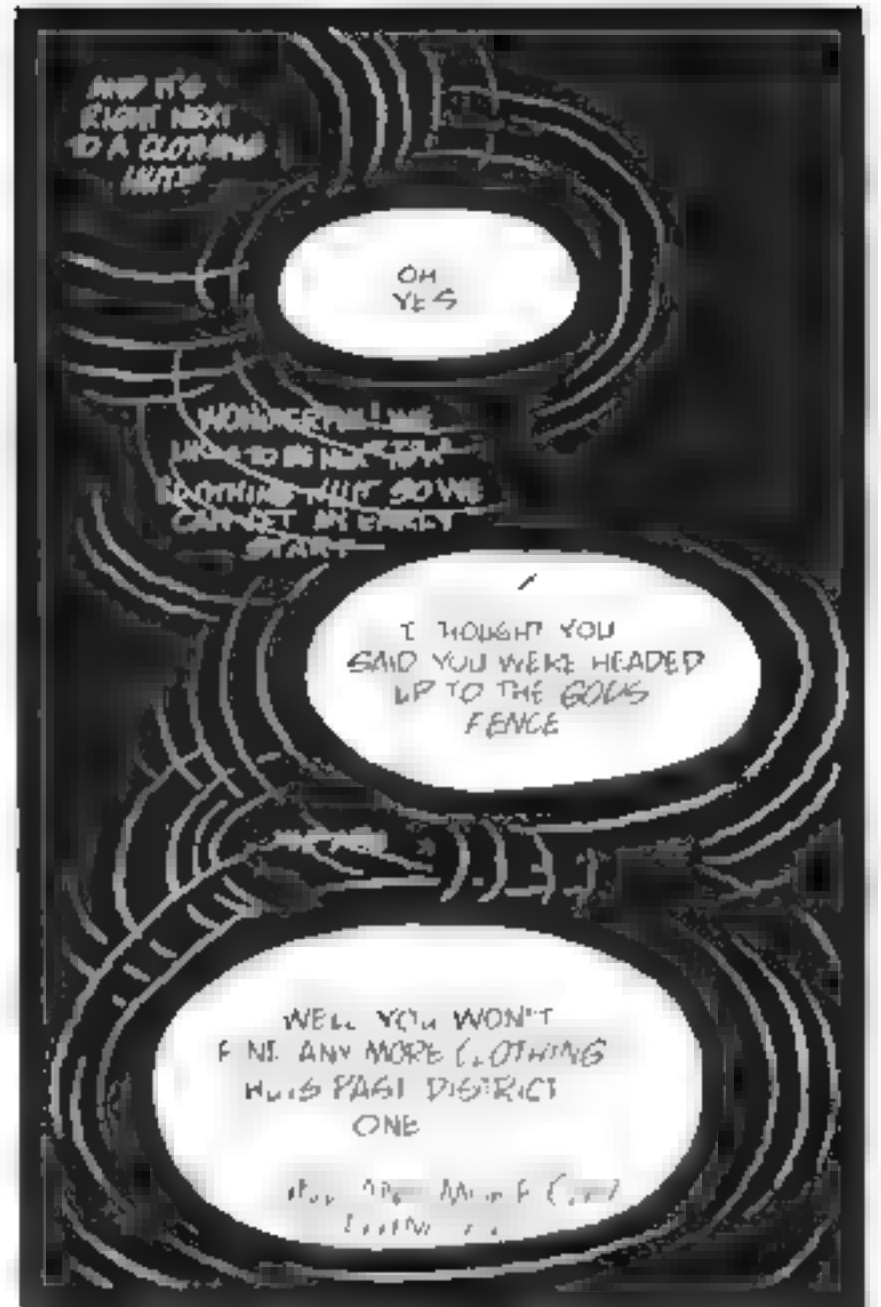
I'VE NEVER  
TOLD ANYONE TO  
TEAR DOWN A PUB  
OR A TAVERN IN  
MY LIFE



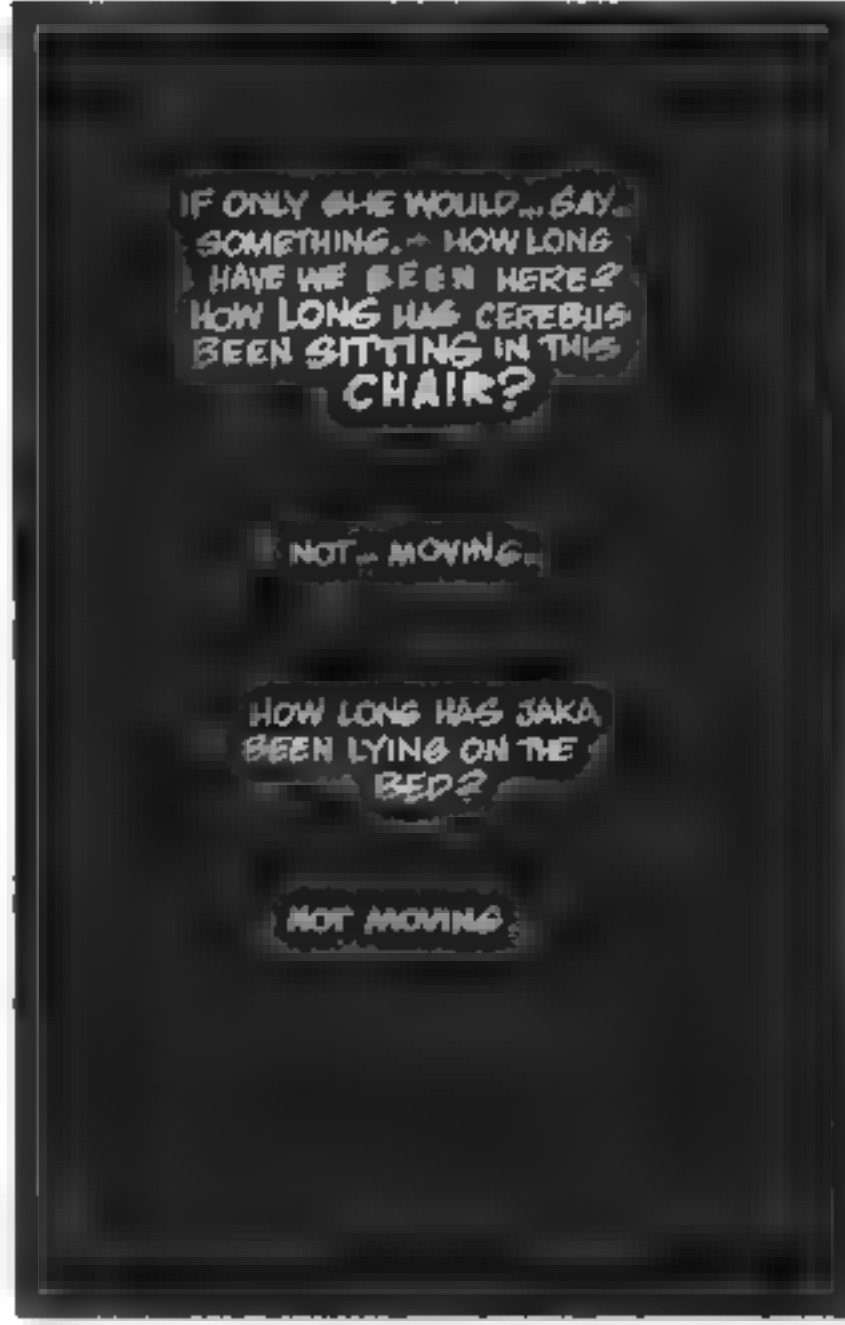
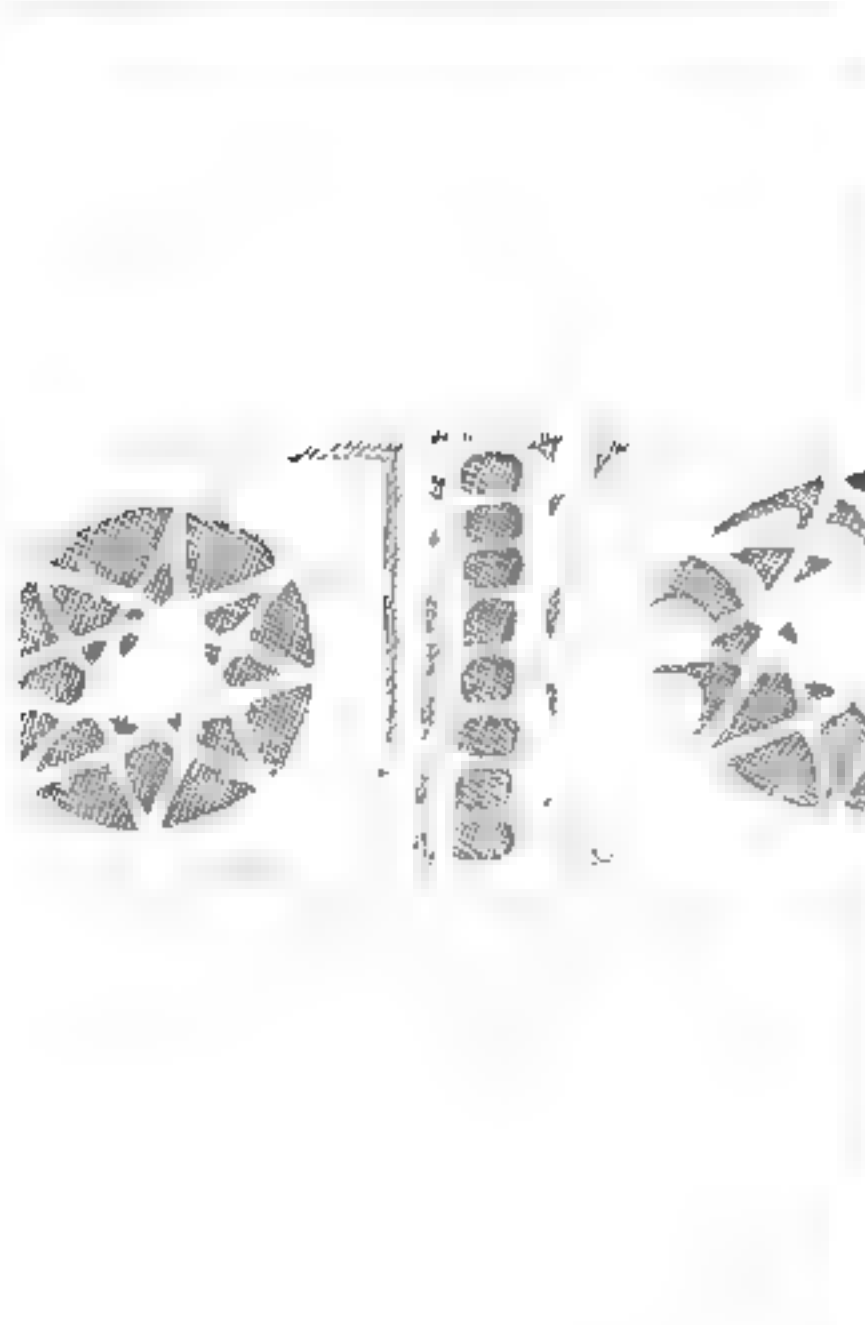


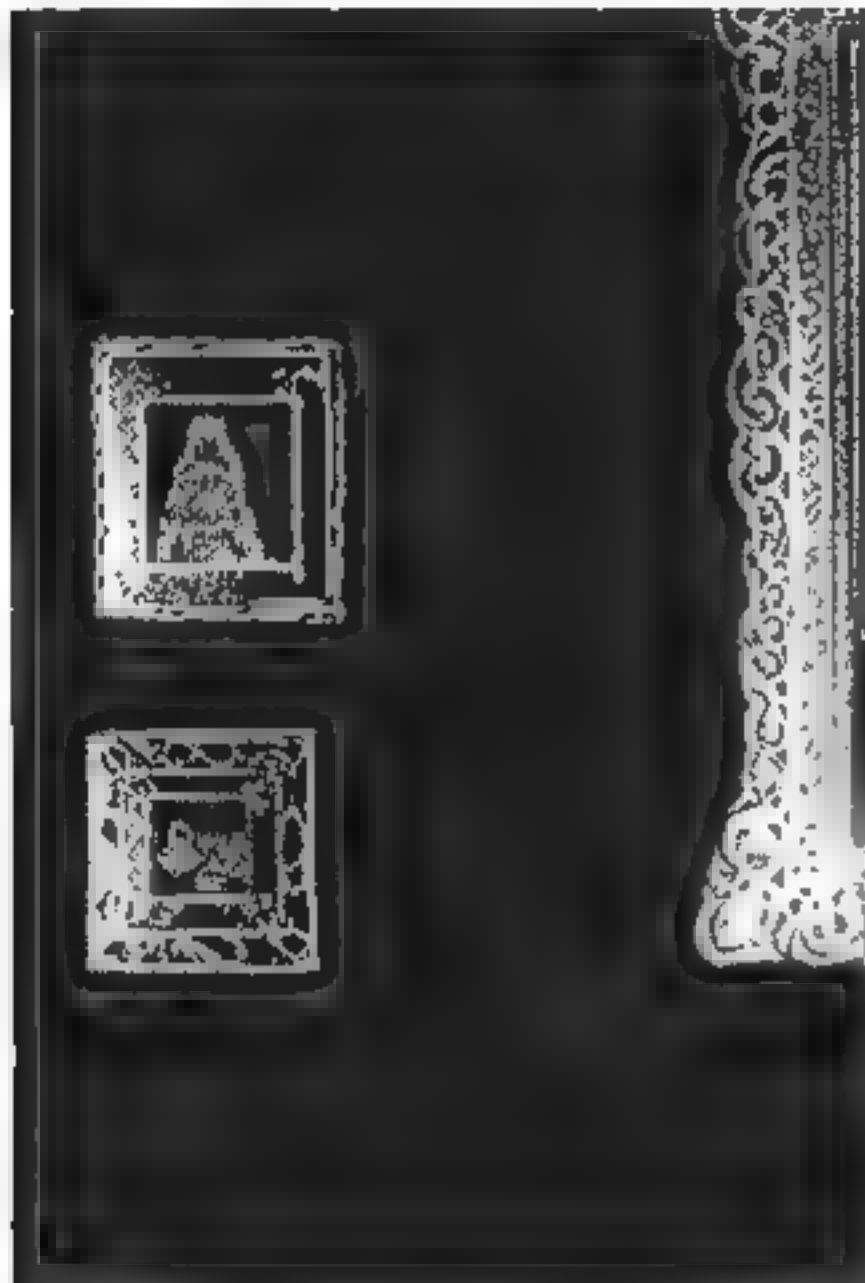












"WHAT AM I  
GOING TO DO?"

"YOU'RE GOING  
TO GO SOUTH,  
JAKA."

"THAT'S WHAT  
CEREBUS  
SHOULD HAVE  
SAID."

"YOU'RE GOING TO  
GO SOUTH. EVERYONE  
GOES SOUTH WHEN  
THEY LEAVE..."

"...BEAR..."

"...HENDERSON..."

"...PRINCE MUCK..."

"CEREBUS  
IS GOING  
NORTH."

"EVERYONE"

"EXCEPT  
CEREBUS"





WHAT  
AM I  
GOING  
TO DO?

"COME NORTH  
JAKA! COME  
NORTH WITH  
CEREBUS TO  
SAND HILLS  
CREEK!"

(THAT'S WHAT CEREBUS WILL SAY)  
"SO THERE AREN'T ANY CLOTHING HUES!  
SO WHAT? YOU JUST CHOOSE THE  
OUTFIT YOU LIKE THE VERY BEST AND  
EVERY MORNING, CEREBUS WILL GET UP  
EARLY AND WASH IT - SO IT'LL BE  
CLEAN BEFORE YOU EVEN WAKE UP!  
CEREBUS WILL WASH THAT ONE GREAT  
OUTFIT EVERY MORNING AND DRY IT!"



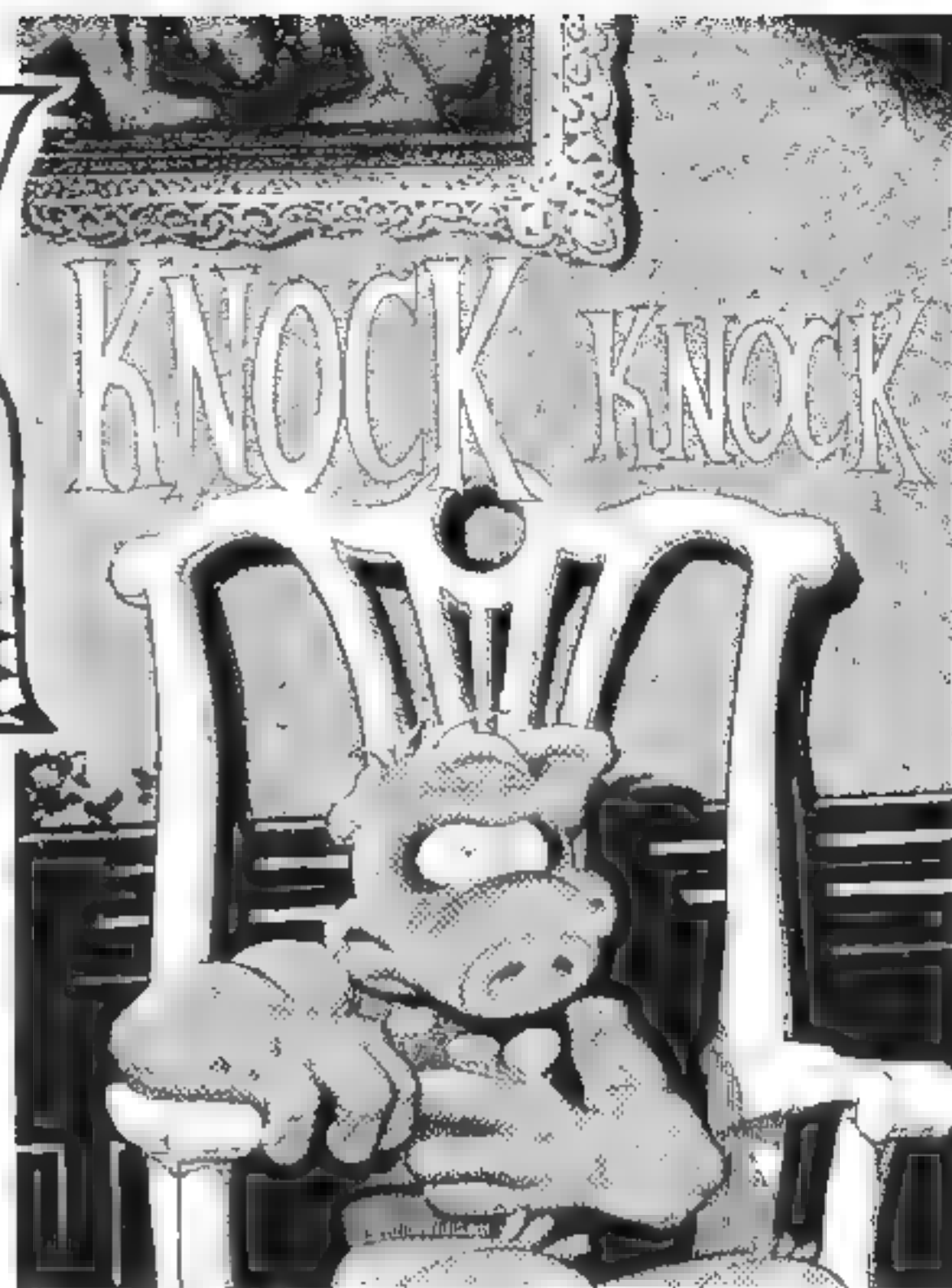
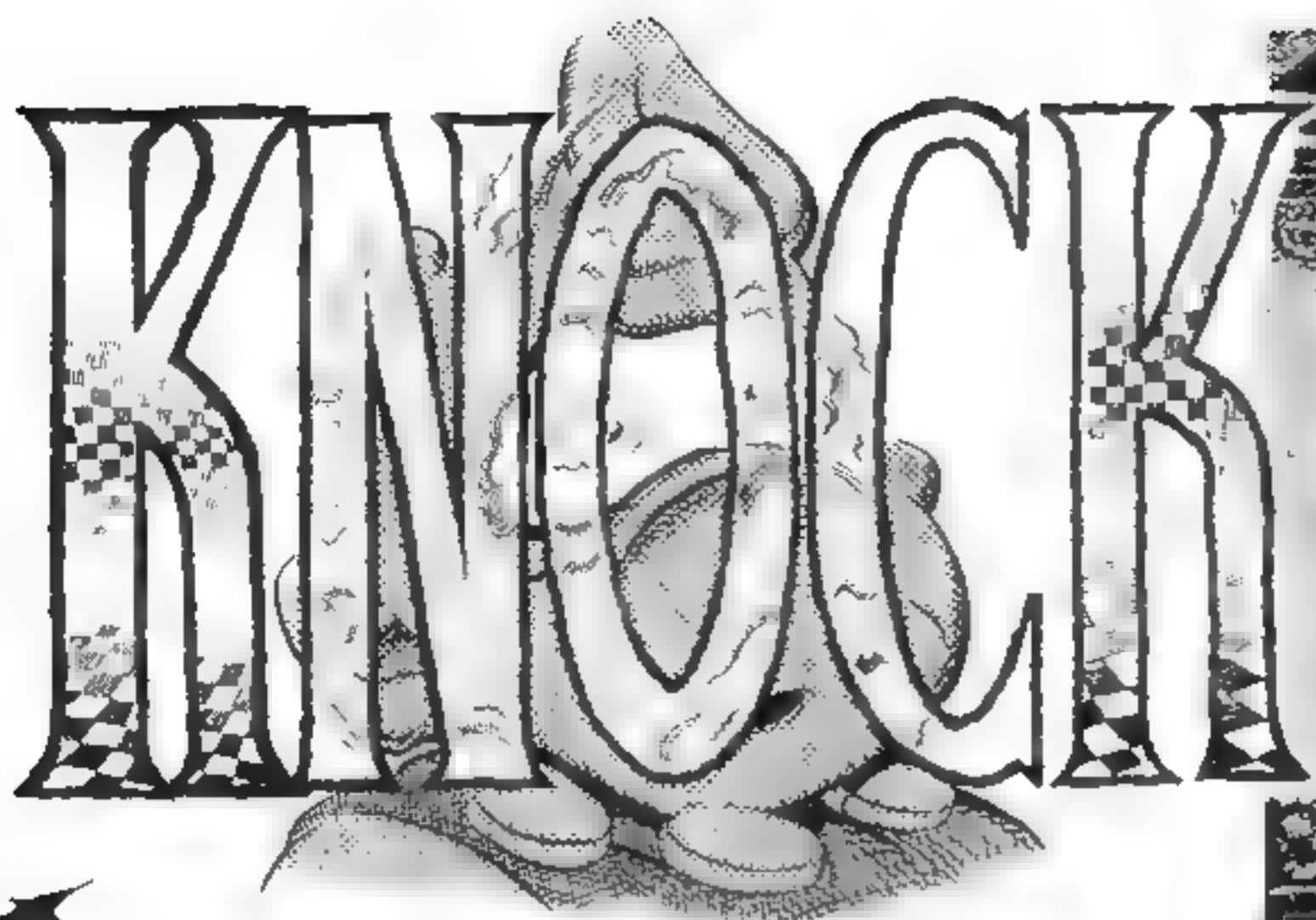
DRY IT  
HOW?

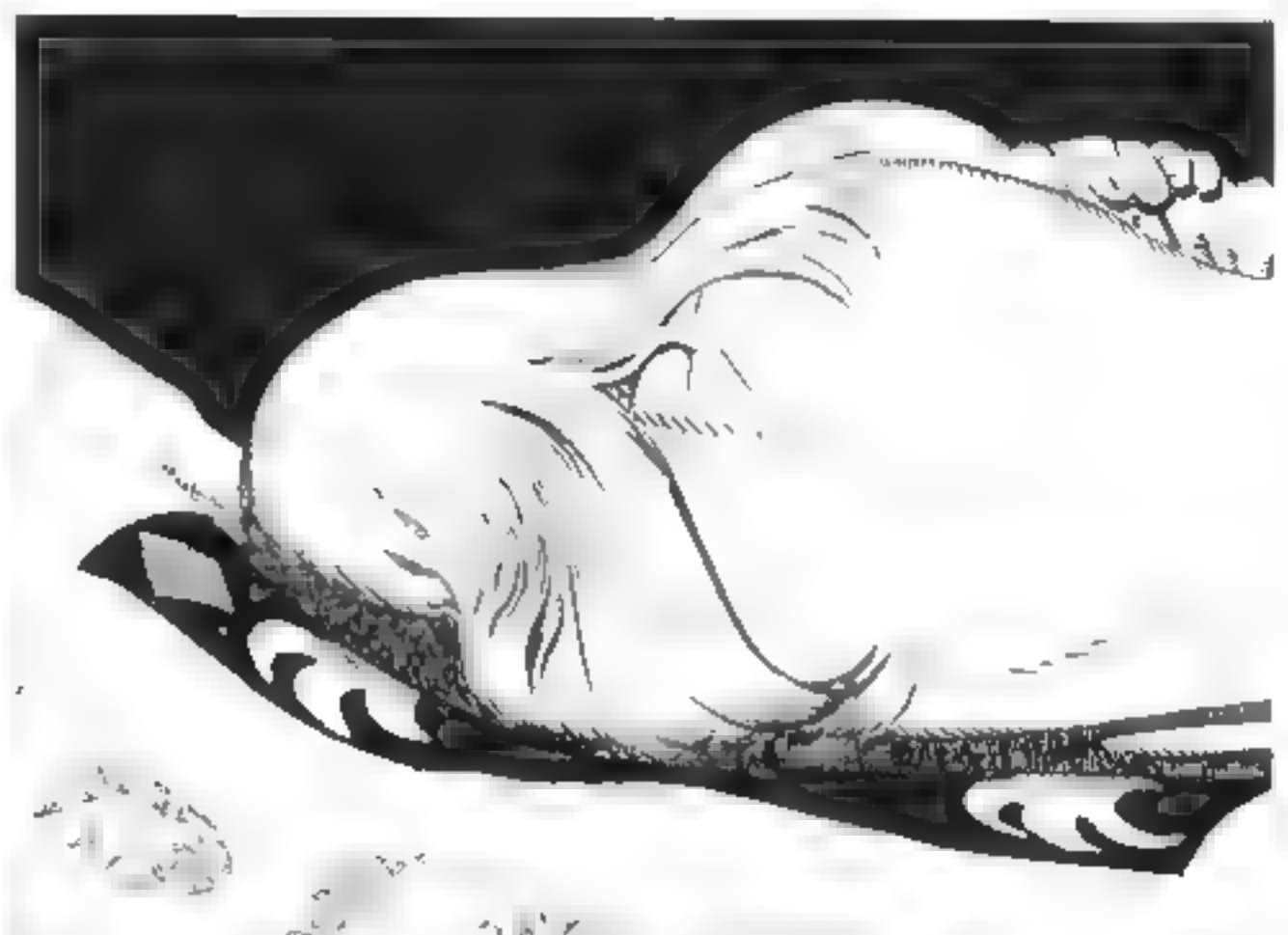
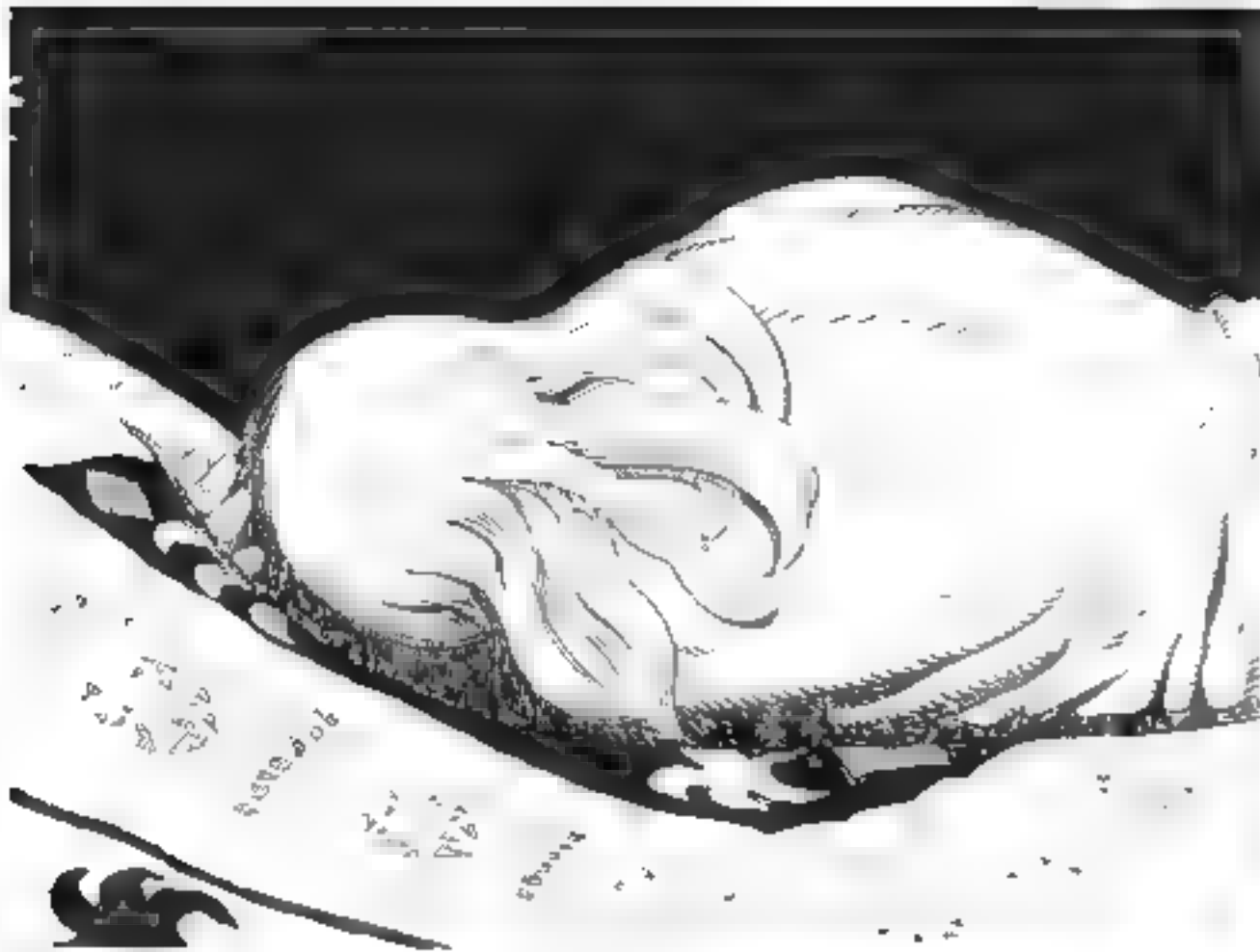


WHY CEREBUS  
COULD DRY IT  
BY...

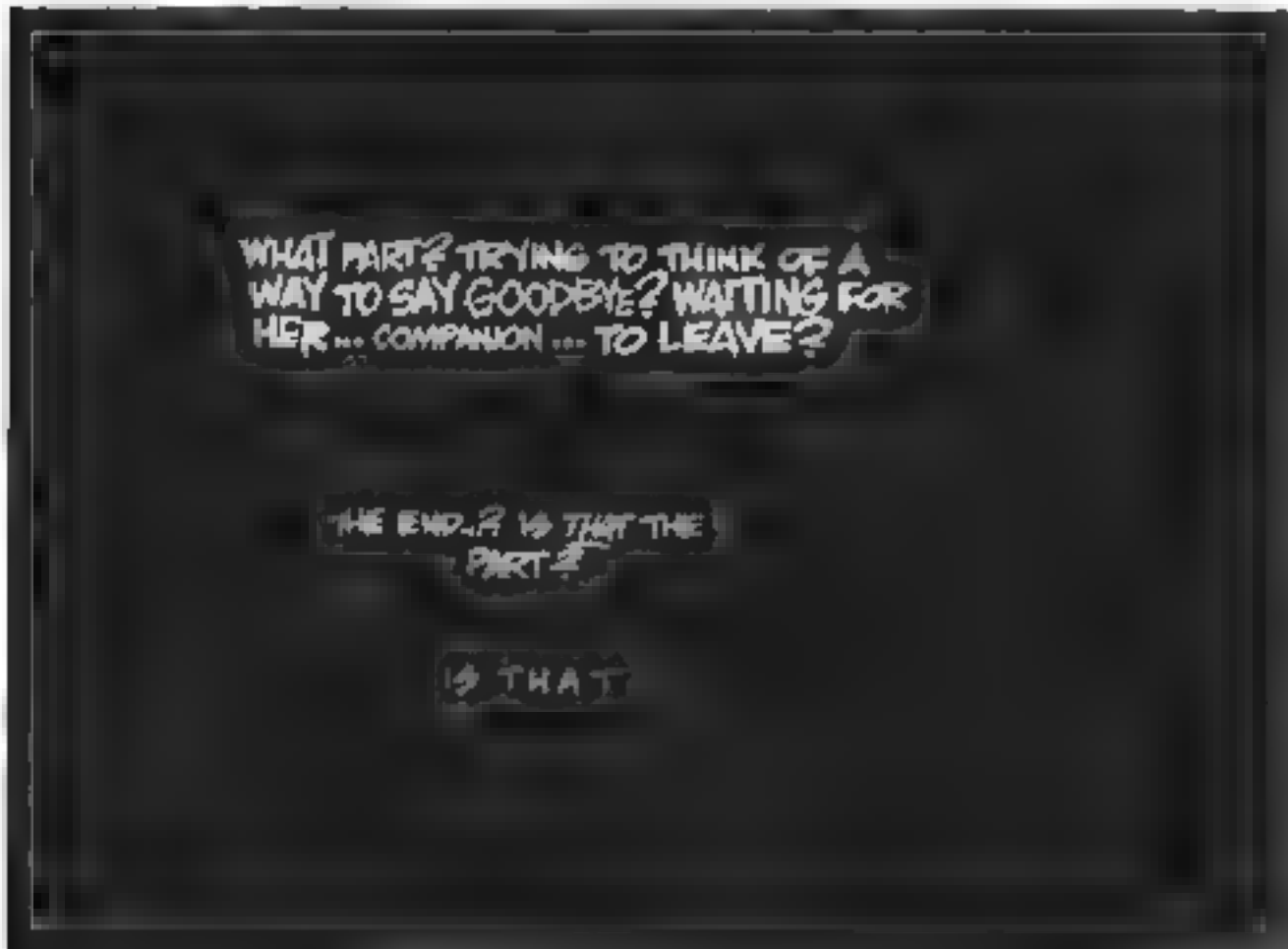
CEREBUS  
COULD  
JUST...

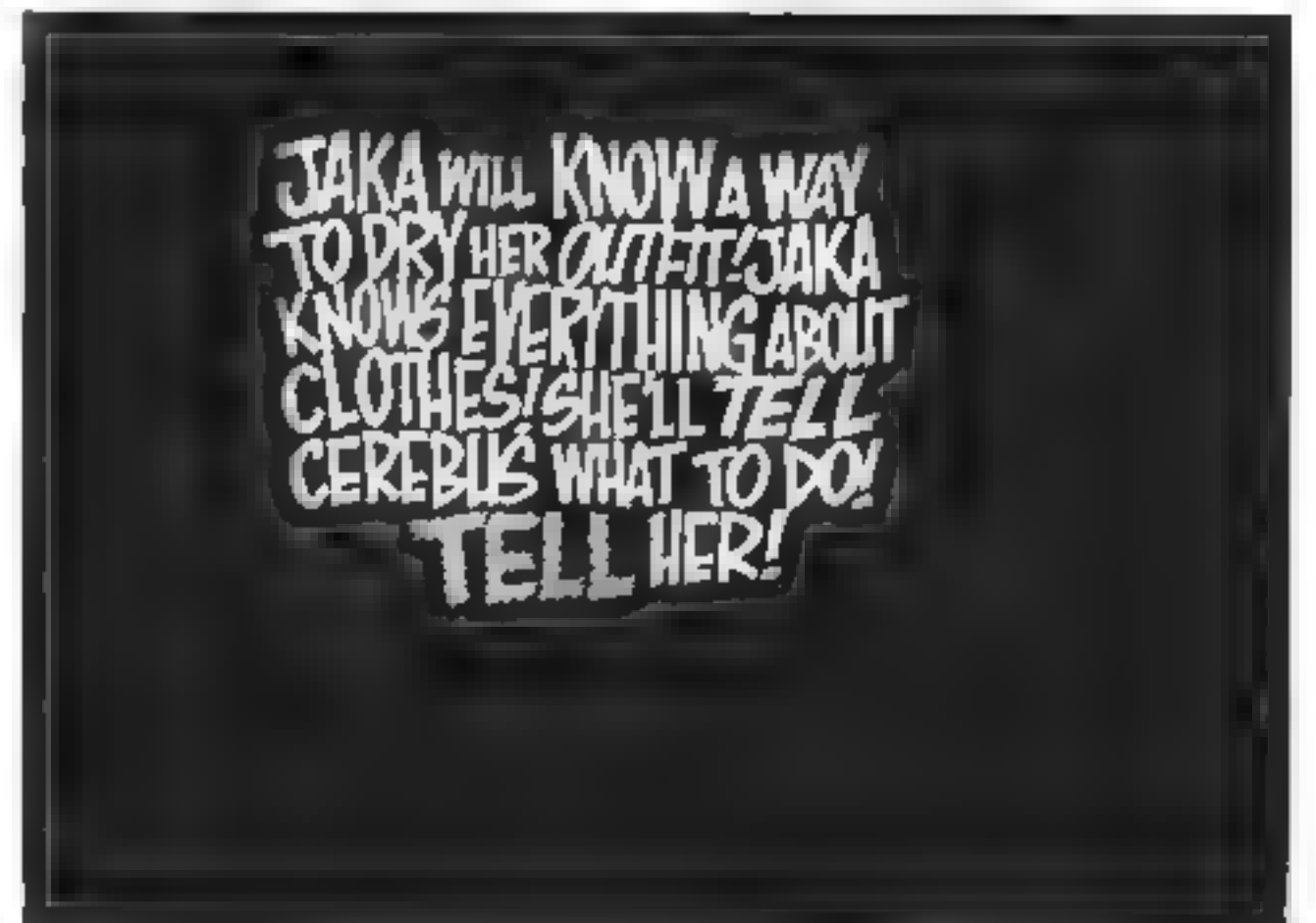
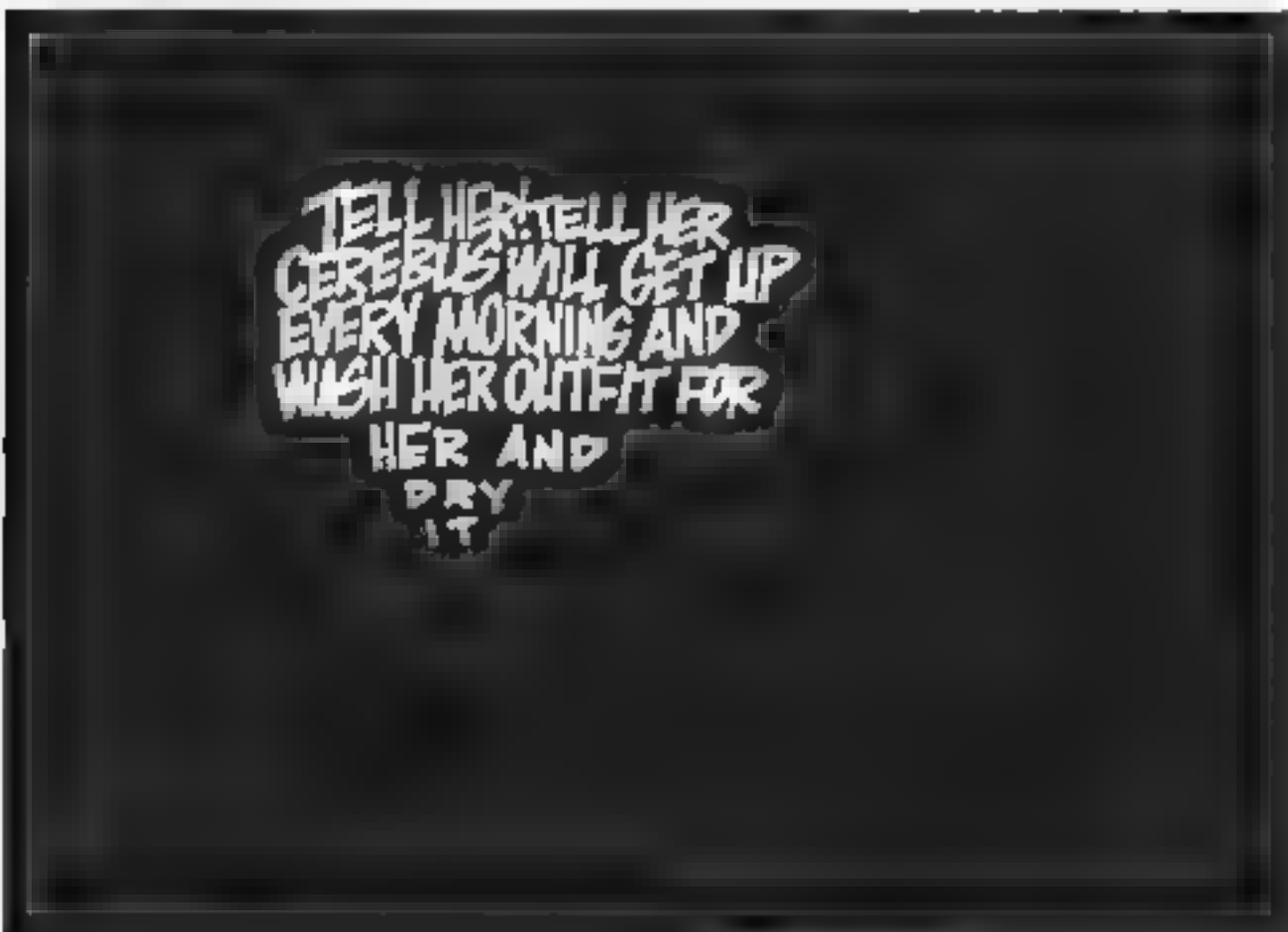
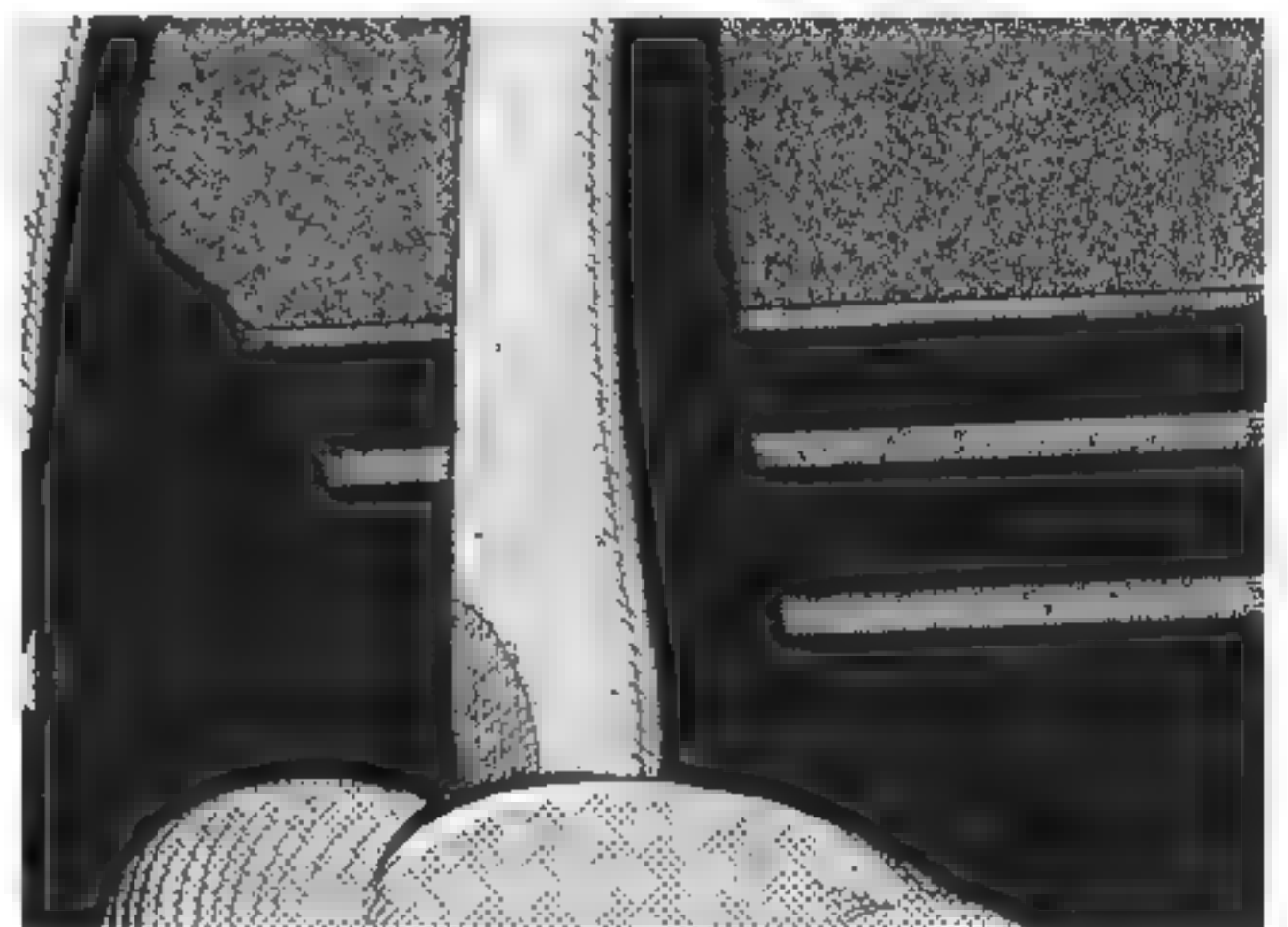
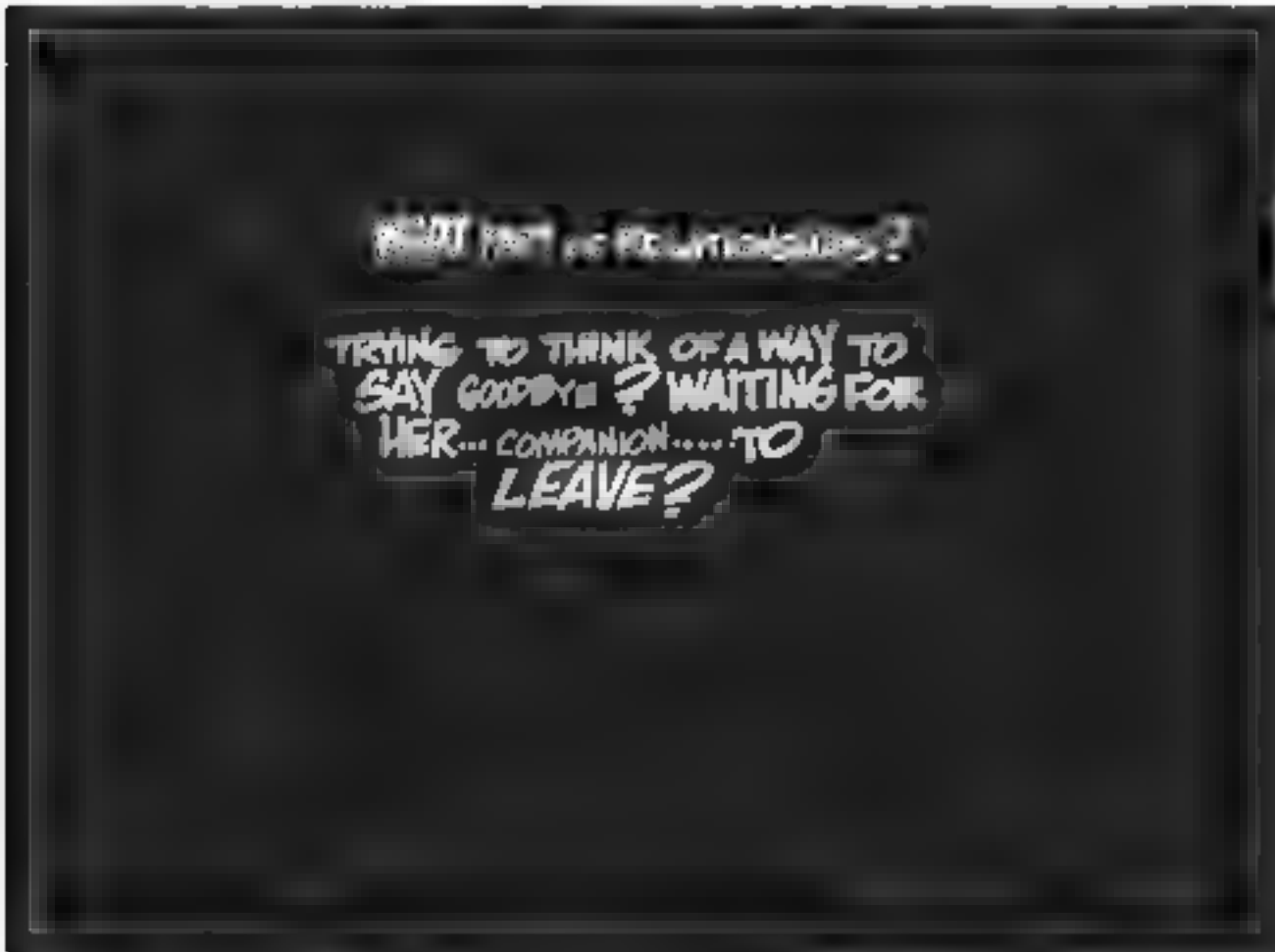
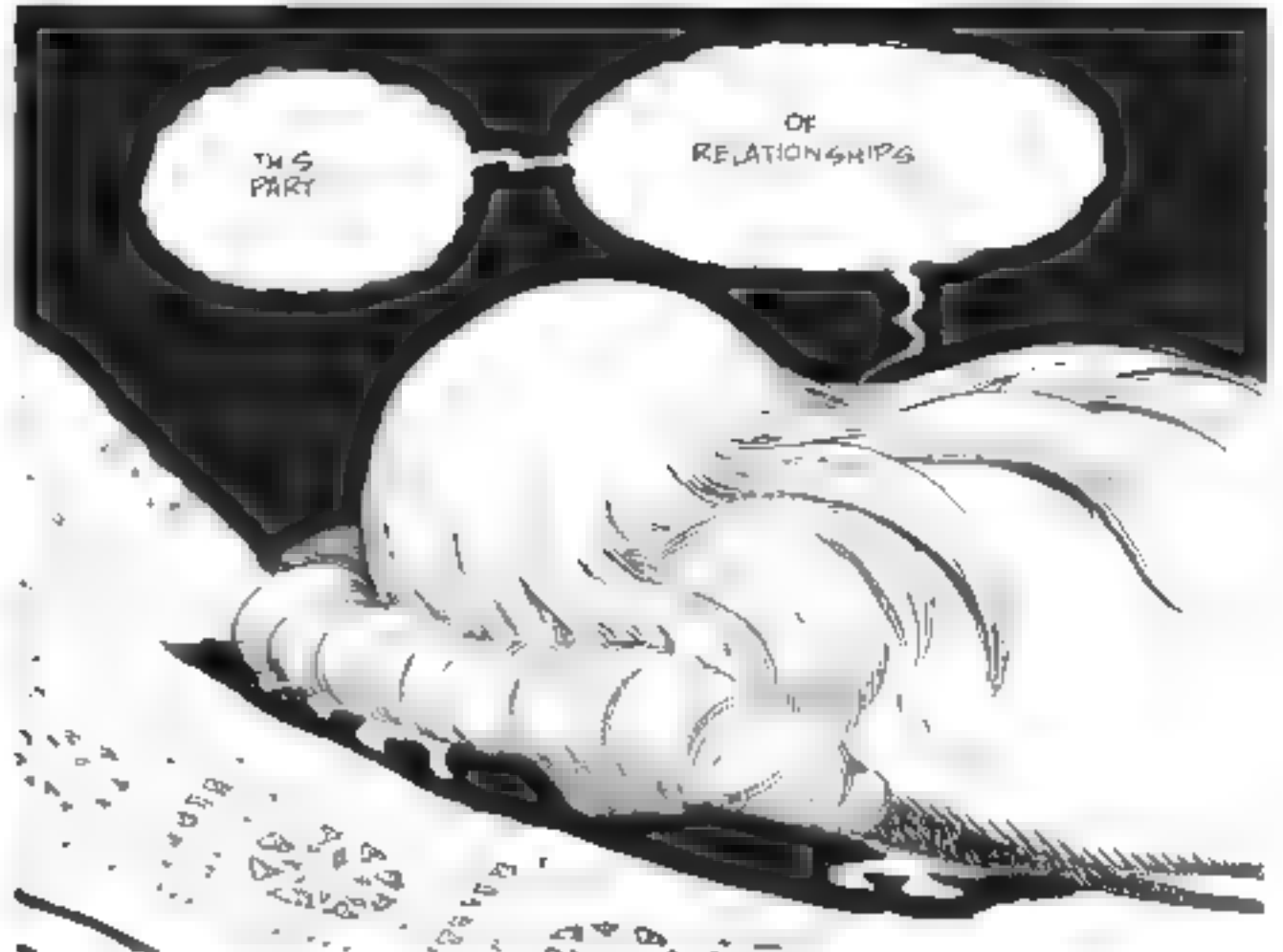
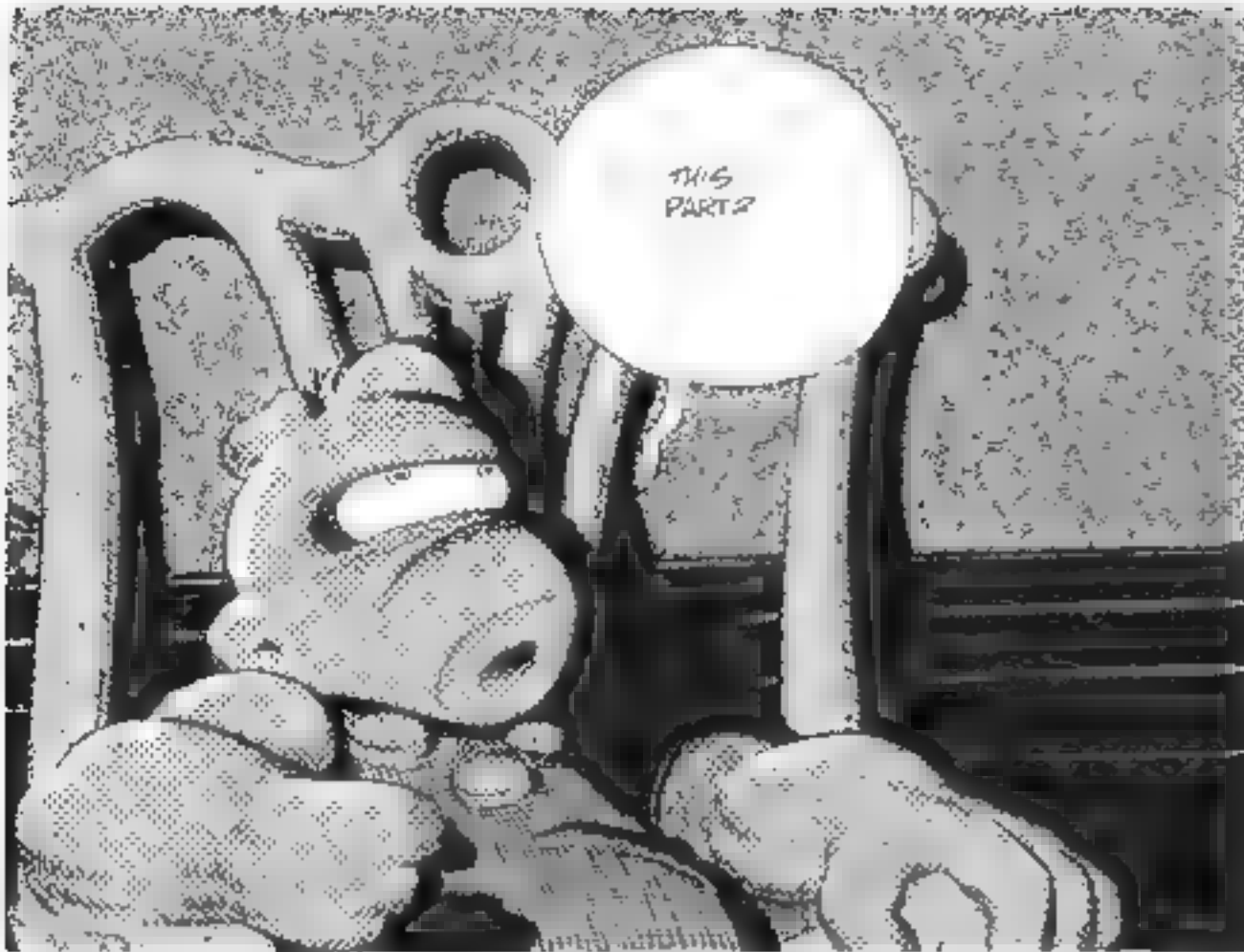
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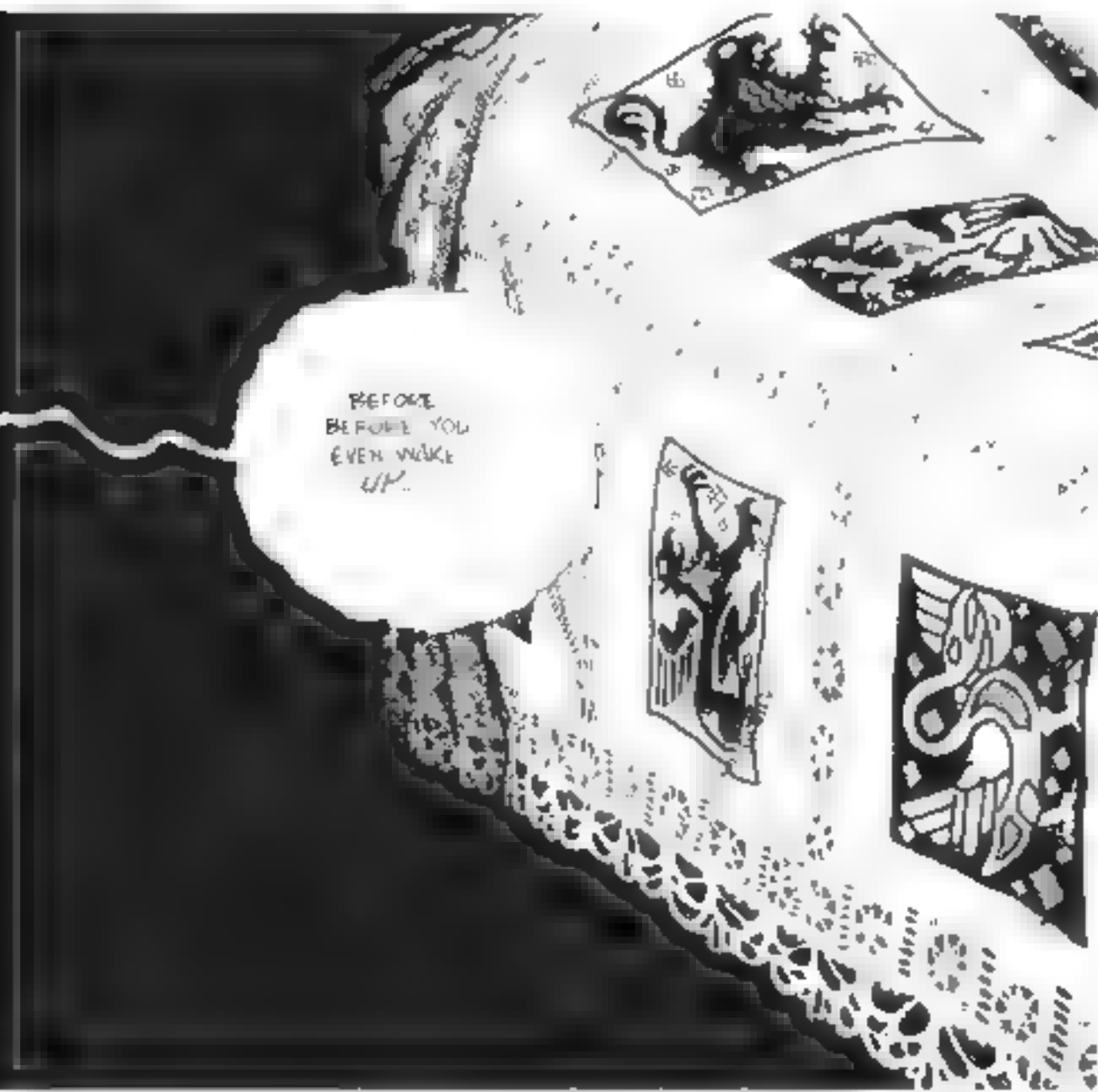
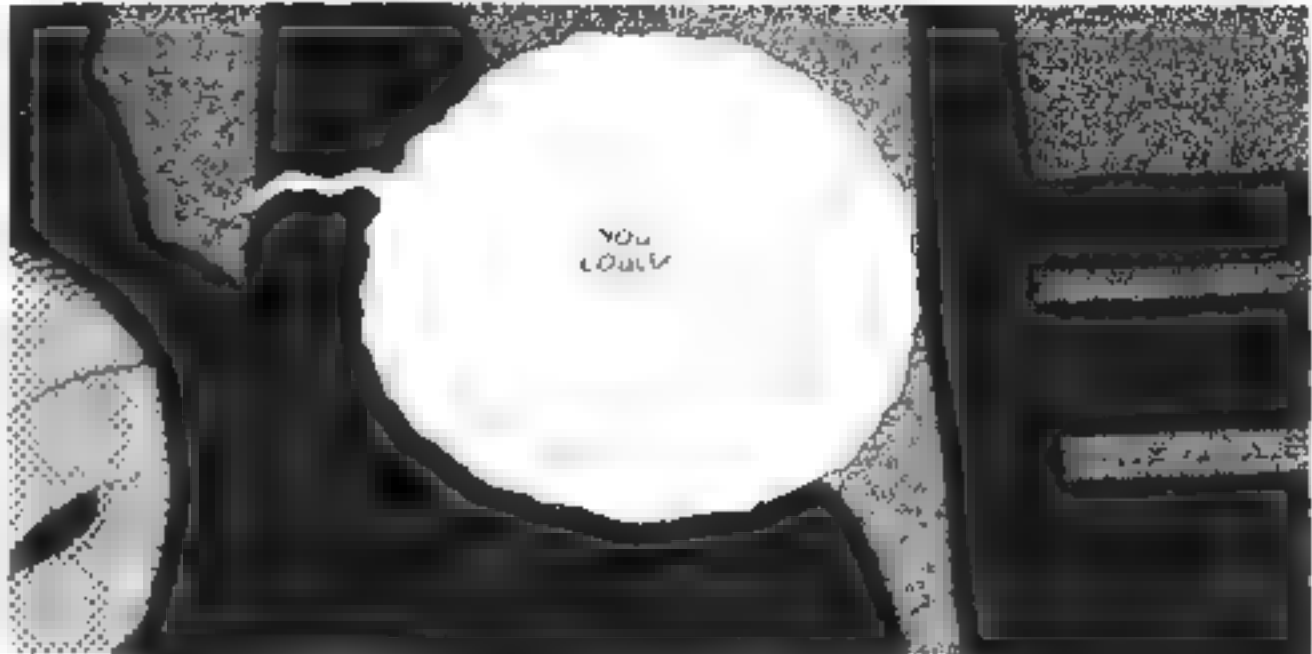
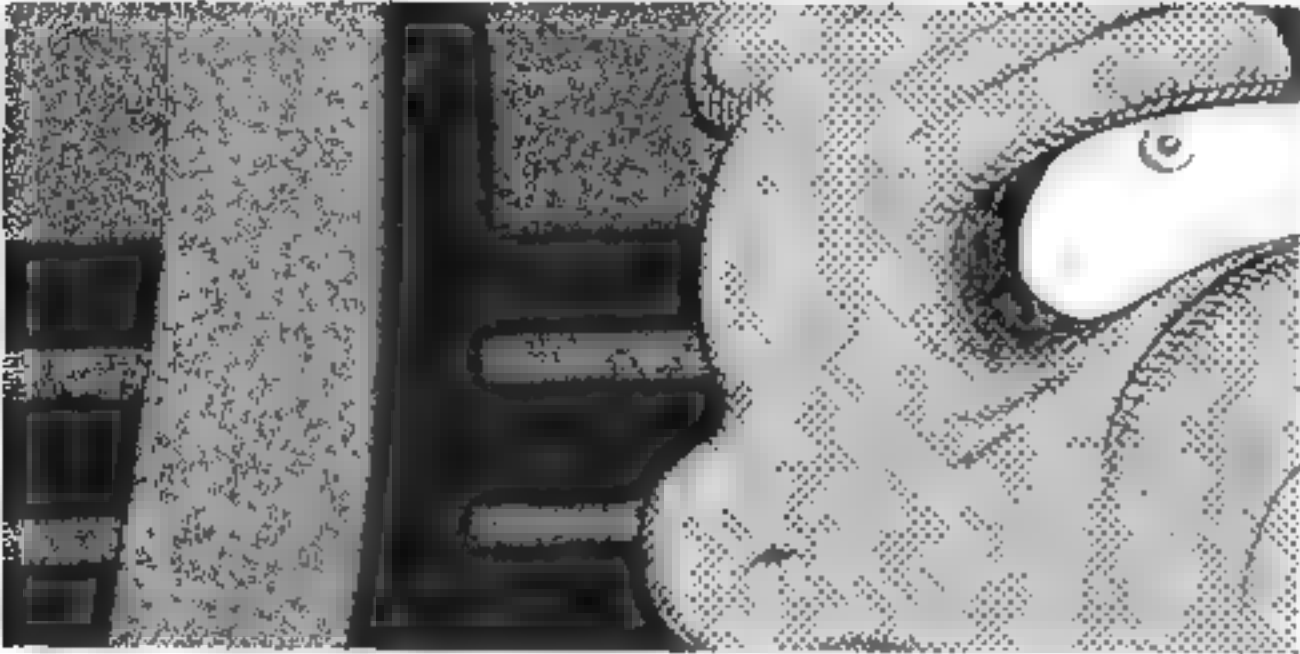




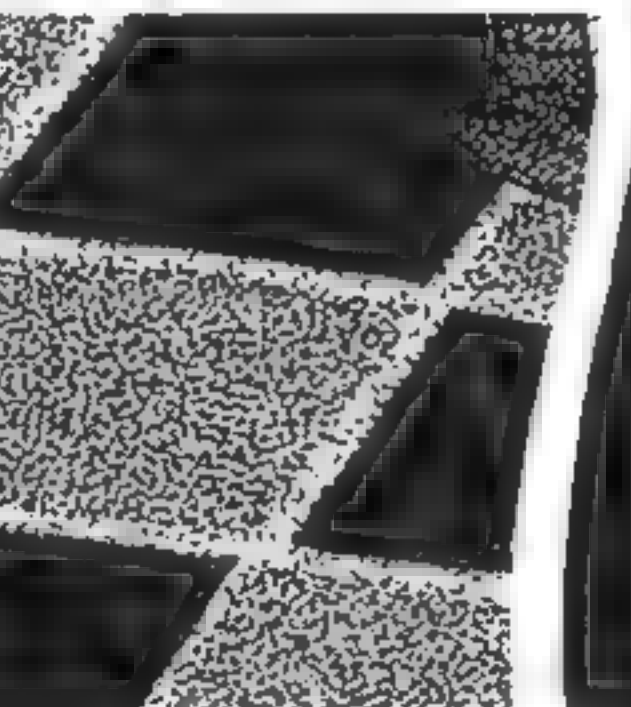
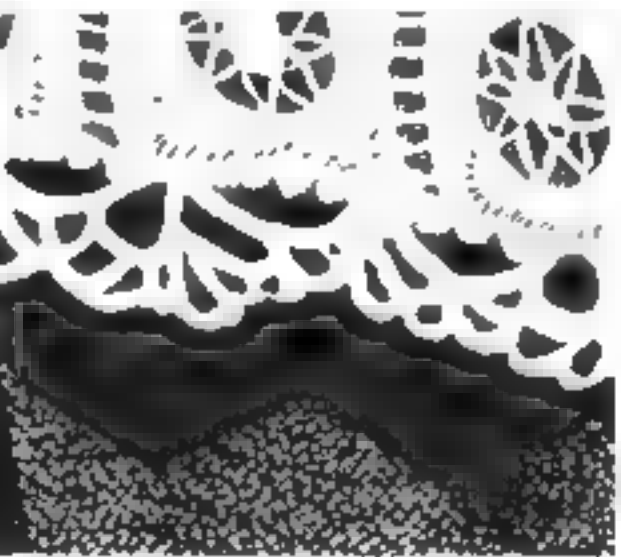
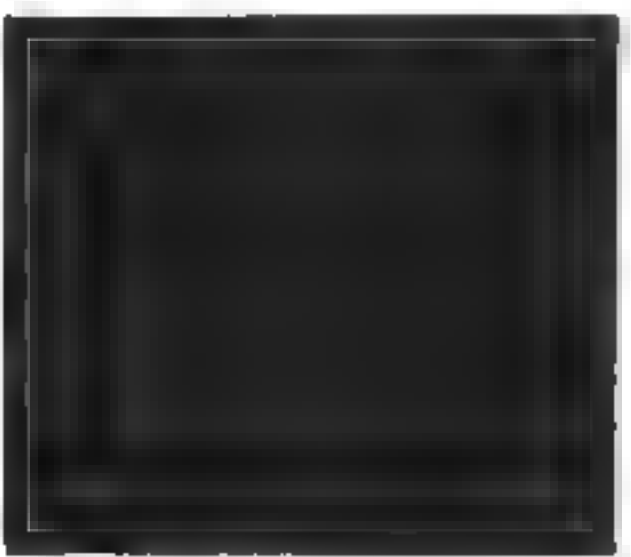
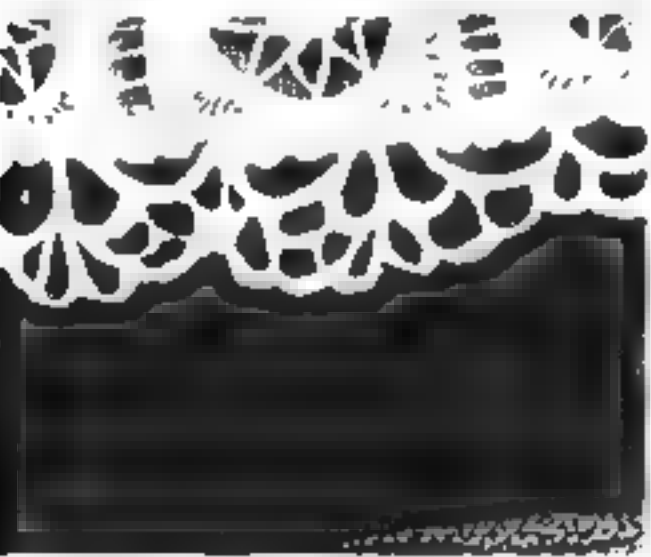
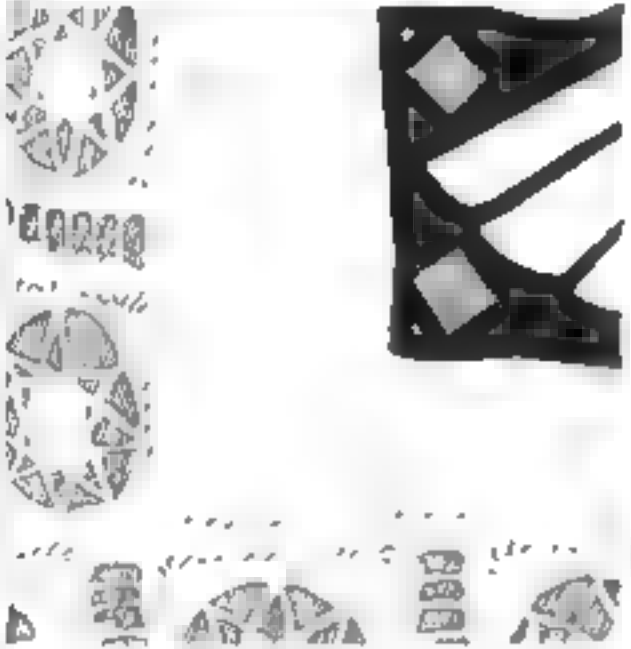
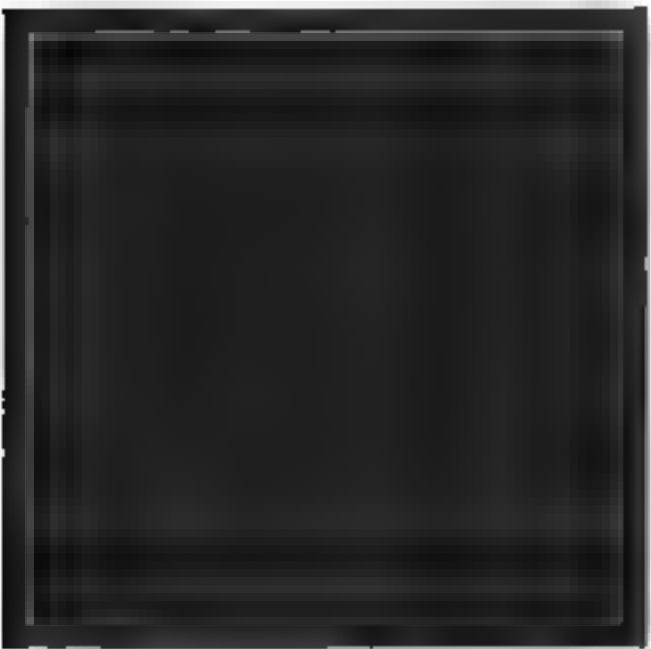
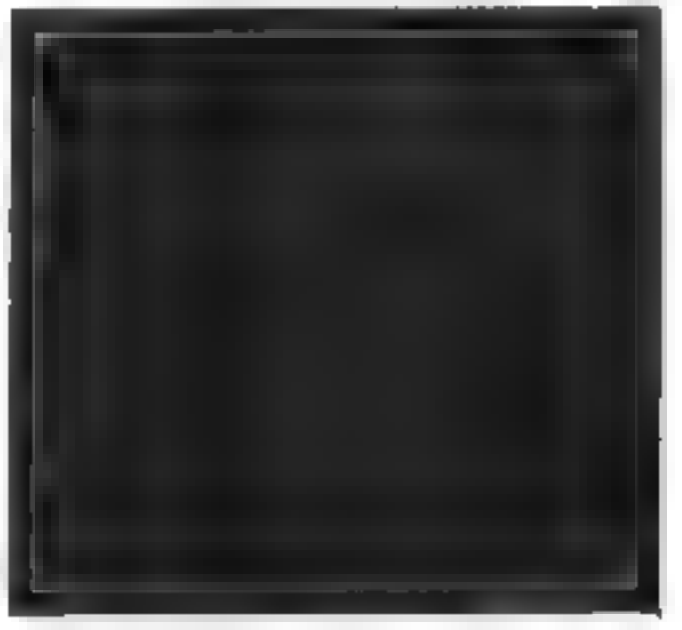
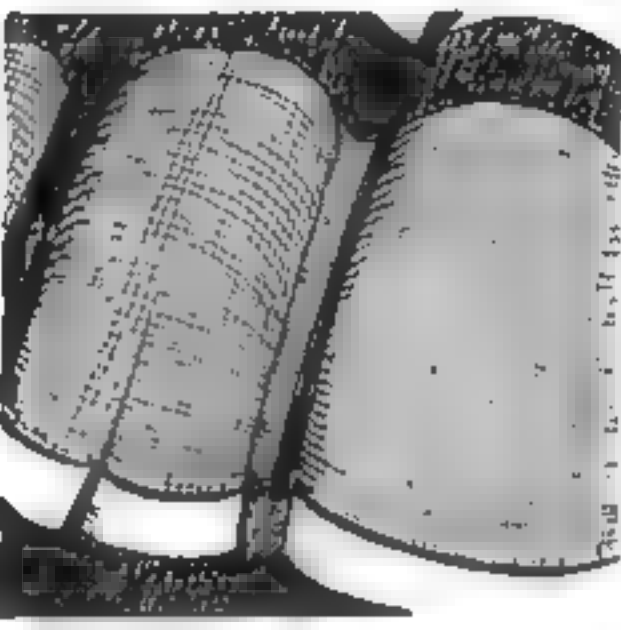
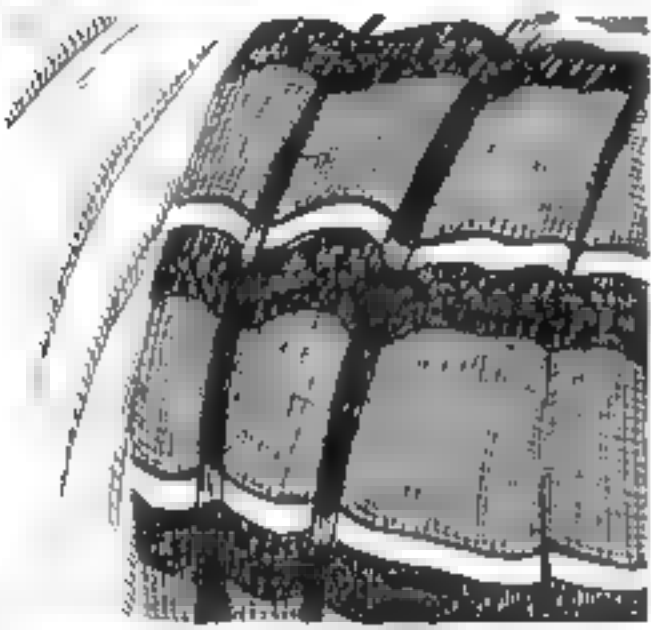
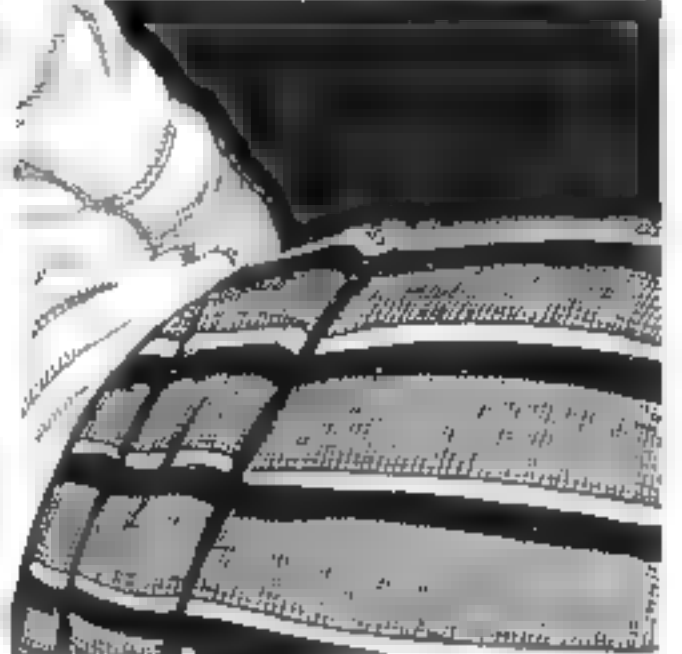
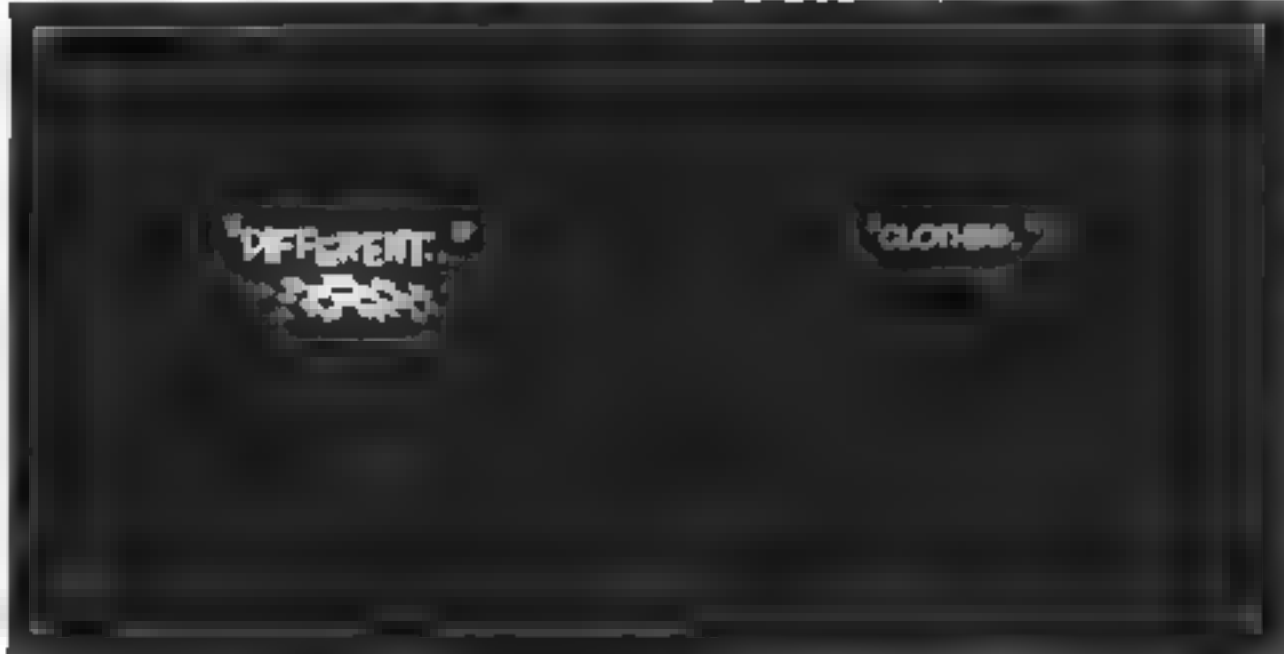
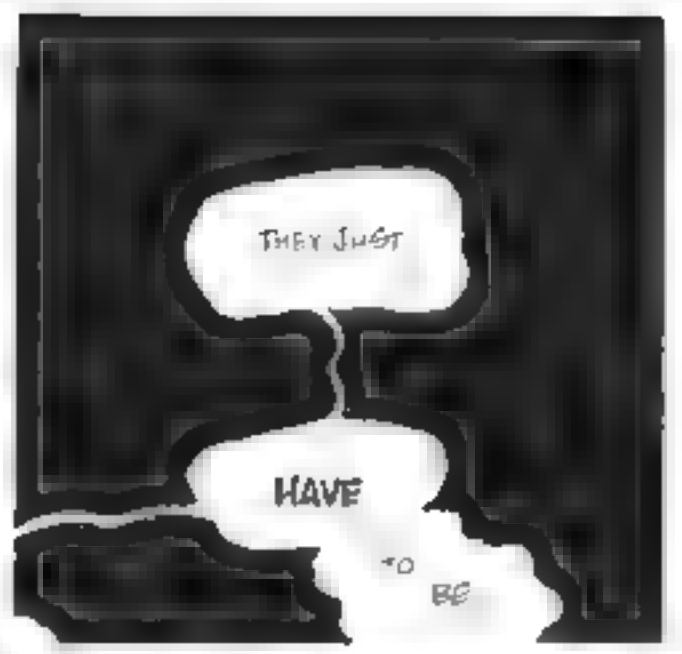
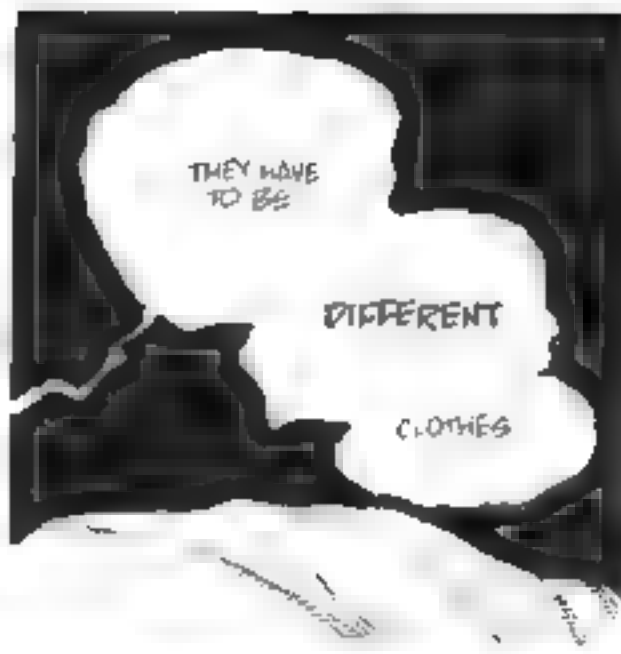








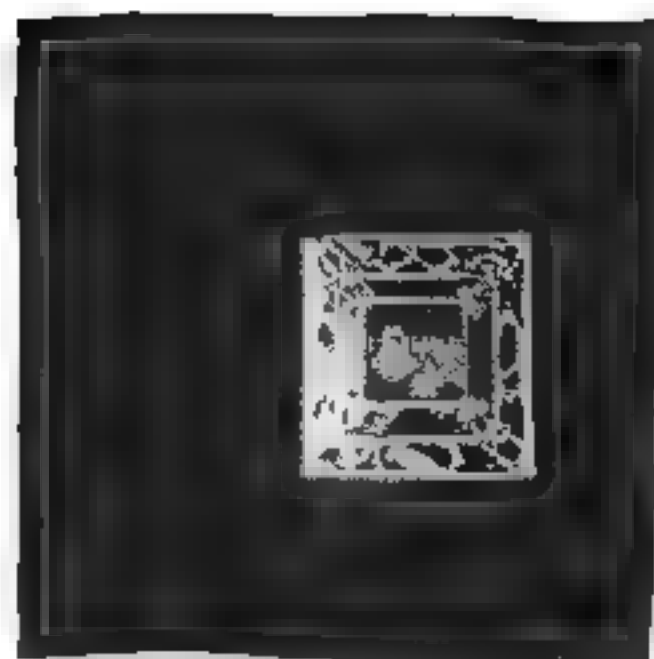




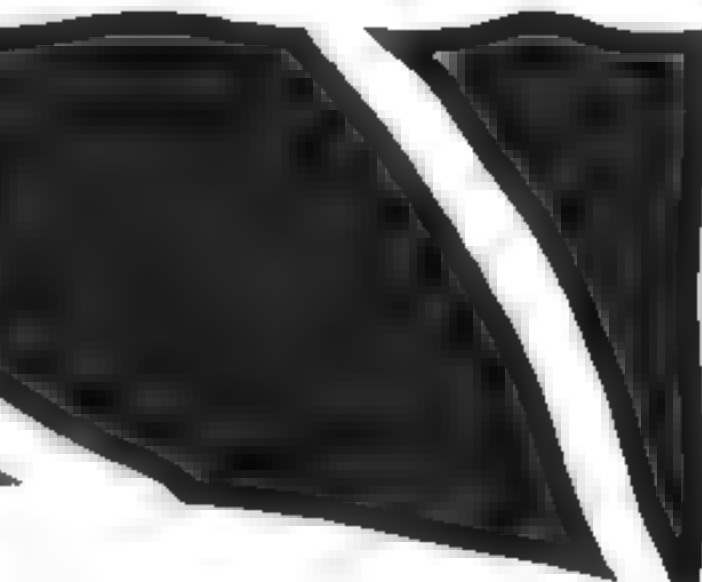
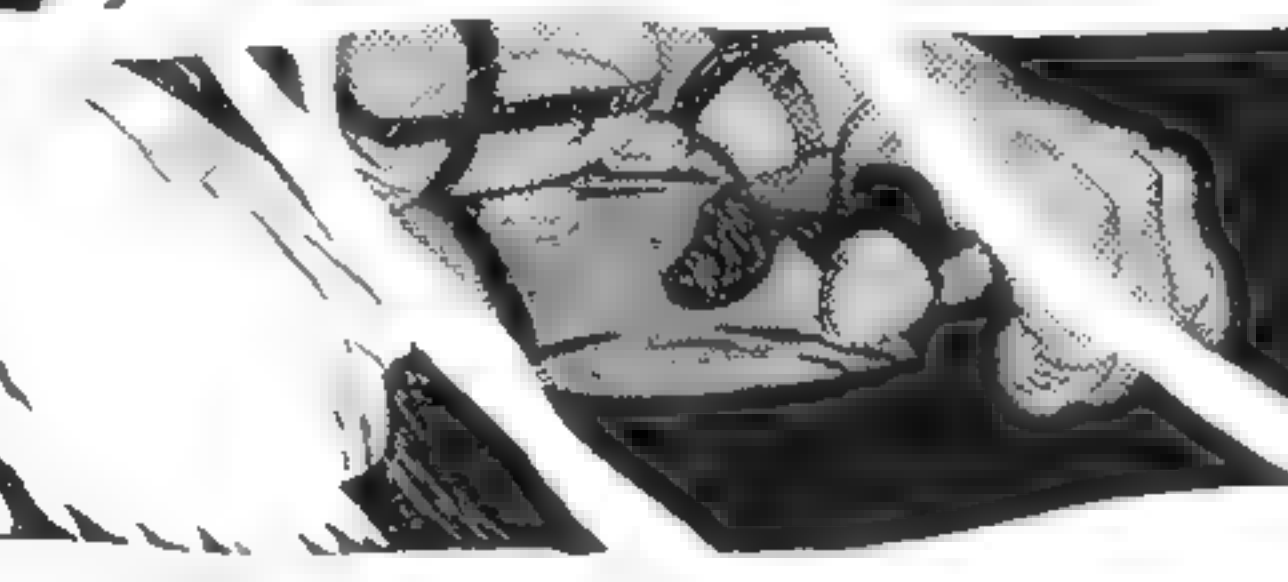
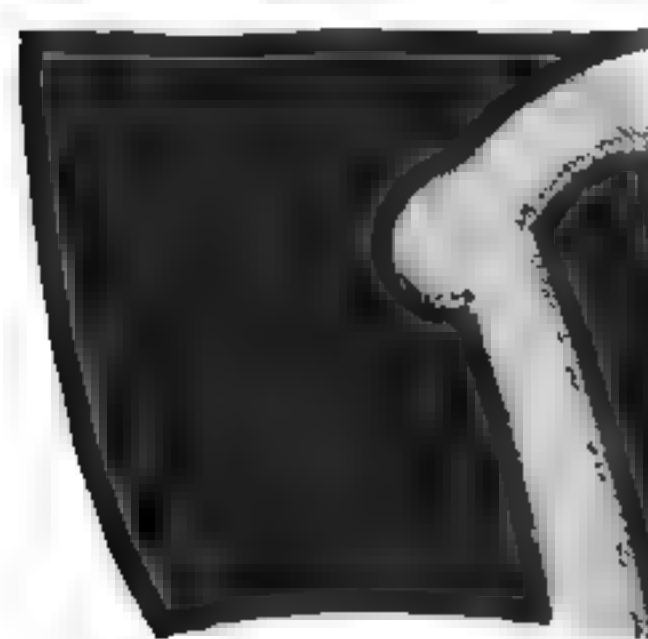
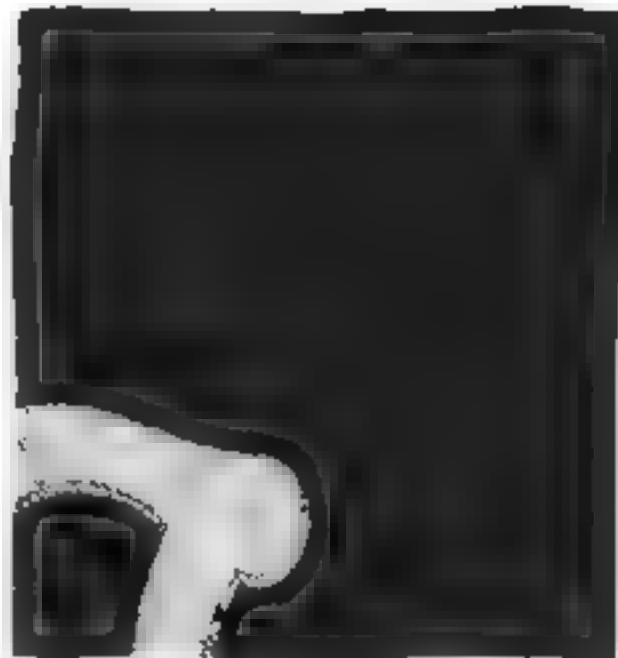
"EVERYONE  
GOES SOUTH  
WHEN THEY  
LEAVE."



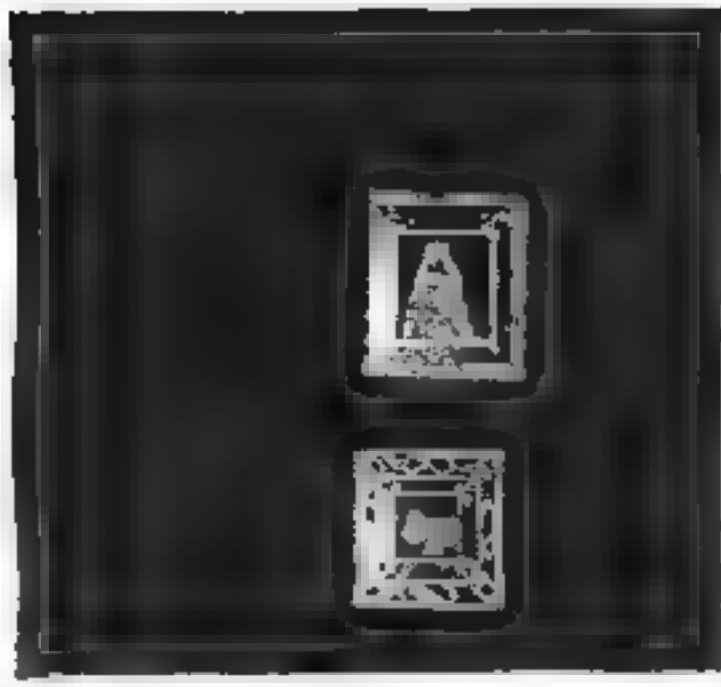
"BEAR.."



"HENDERSON!"



"EVERYONE"



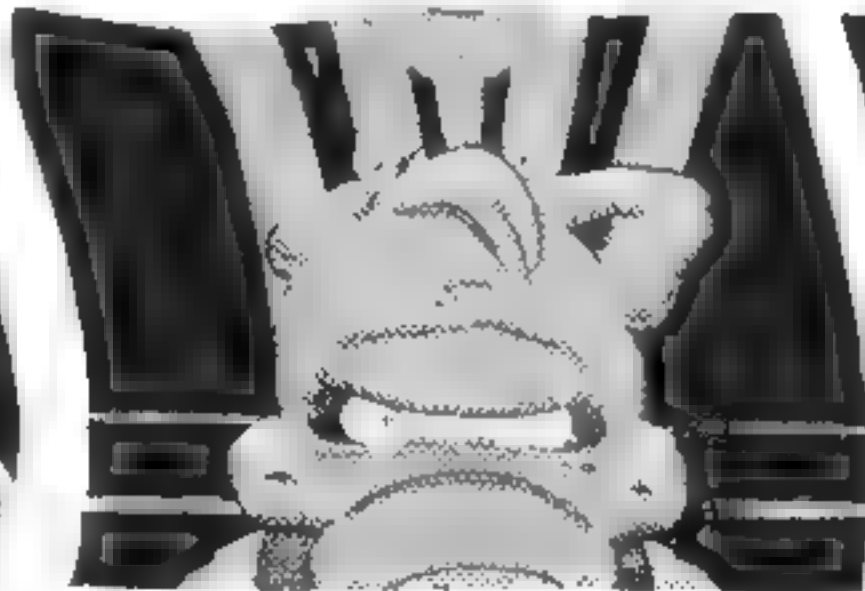
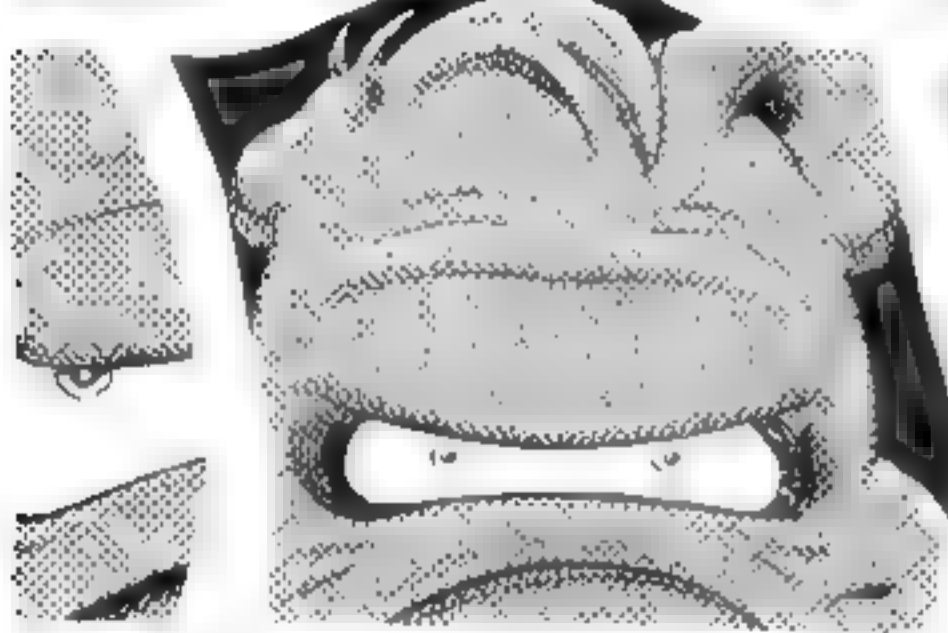
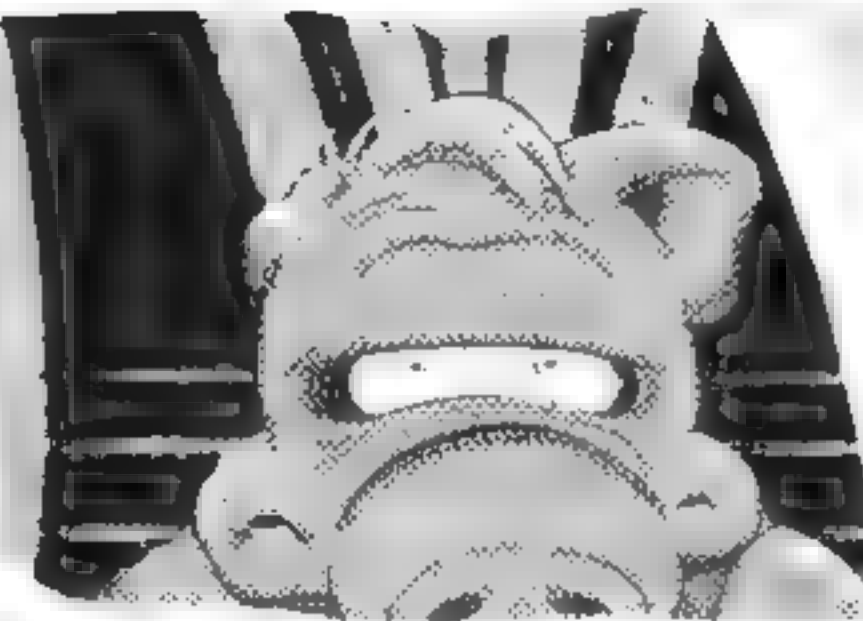
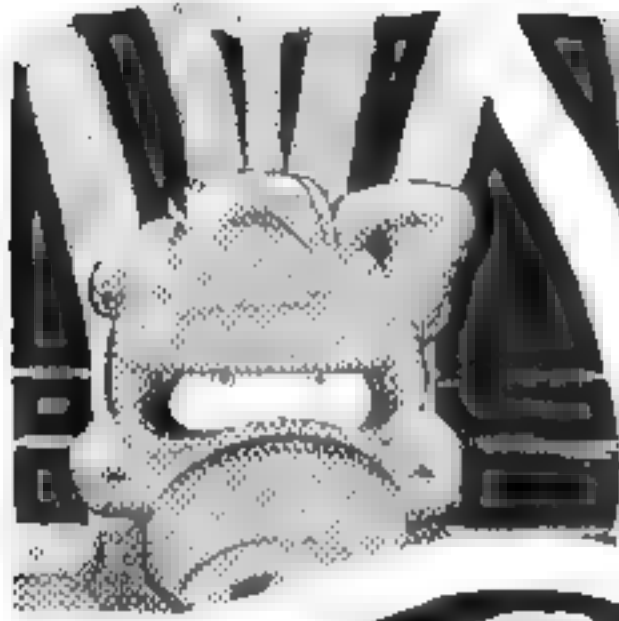
"EXCEPT"



"EXCEPT  
WOLFGANG"



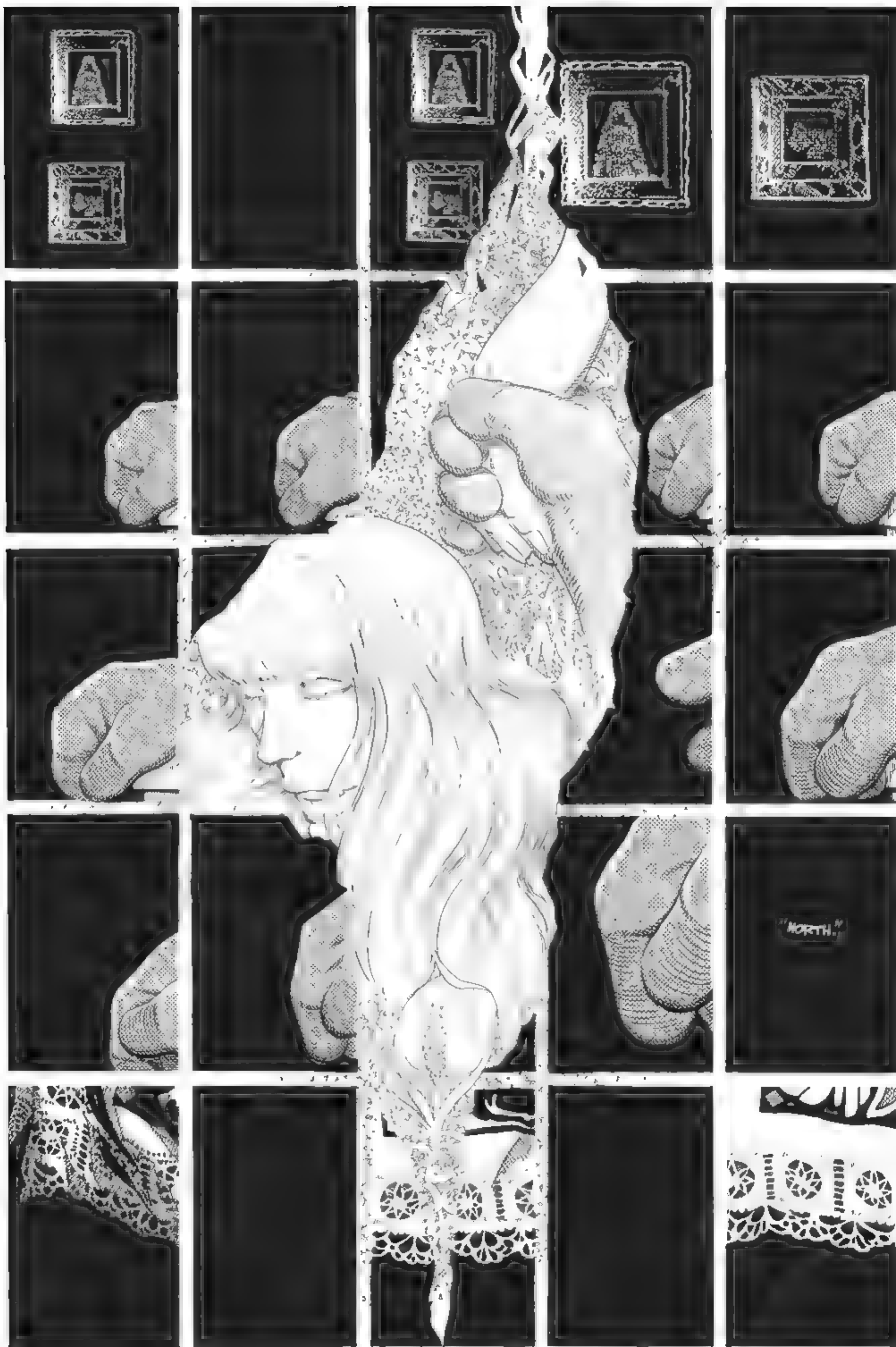
"EXCEPT 6  
GOING  
NORTH"

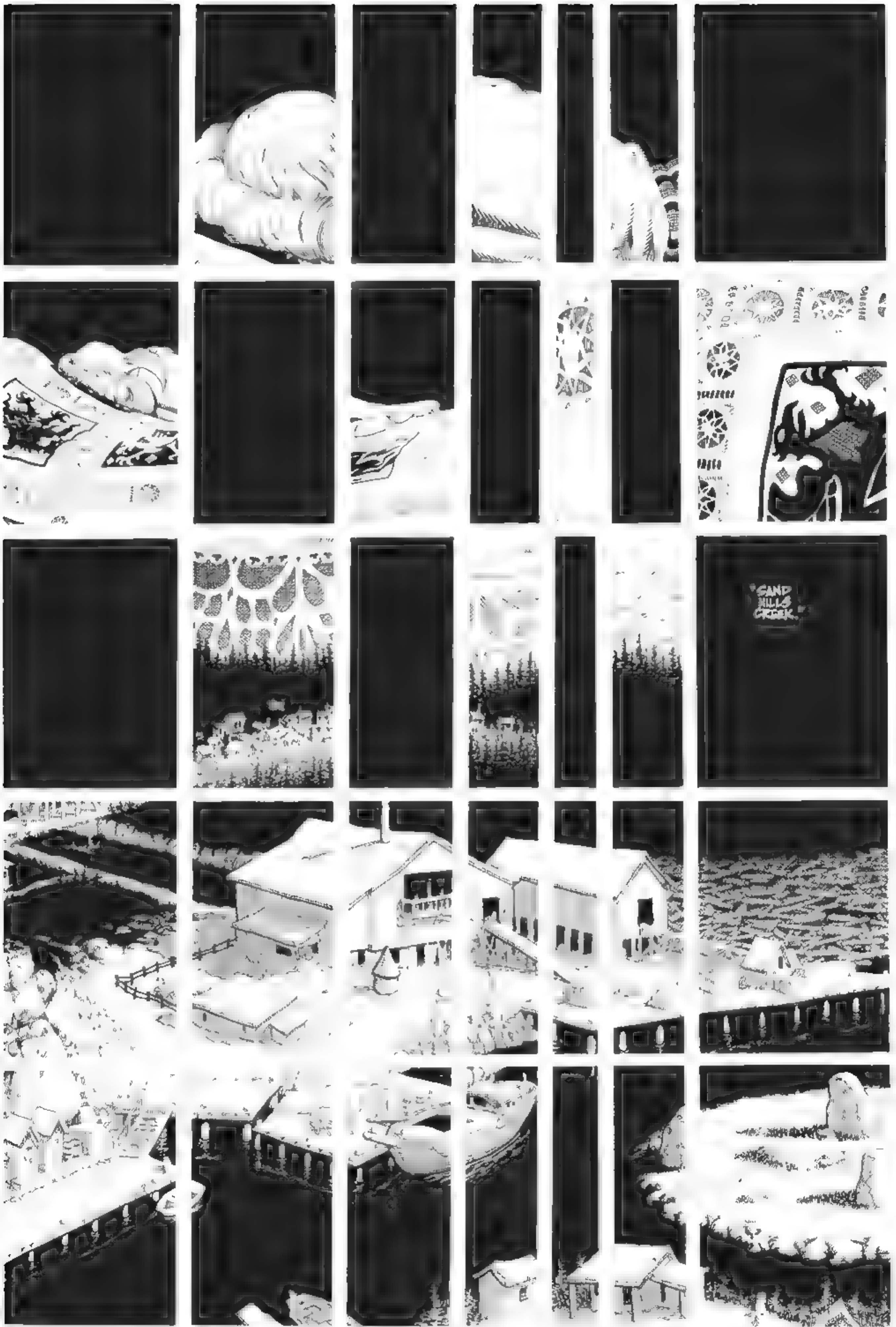


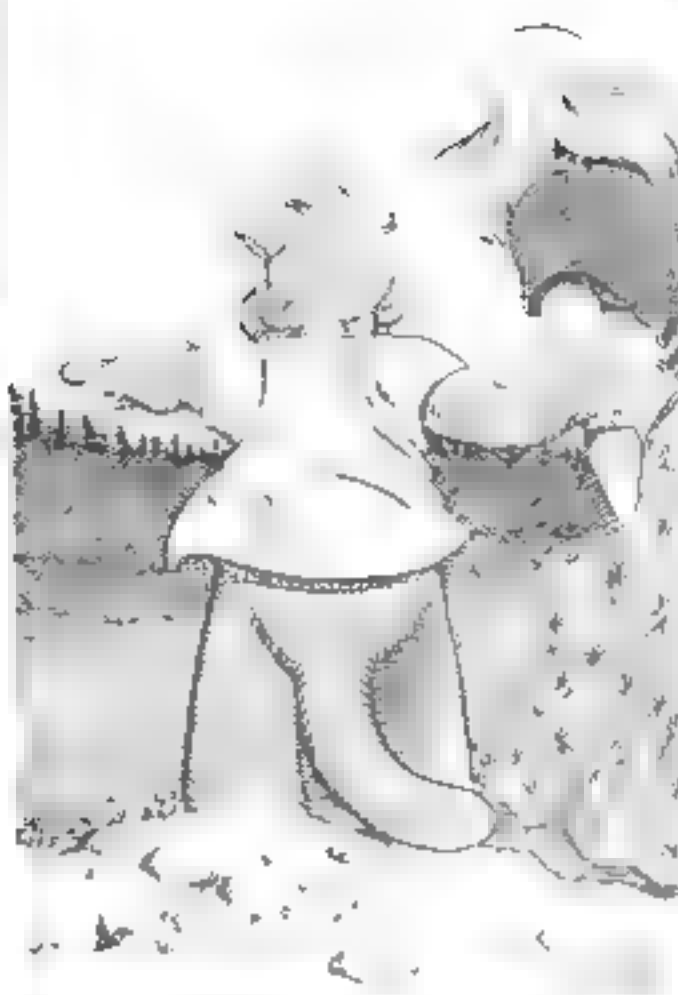
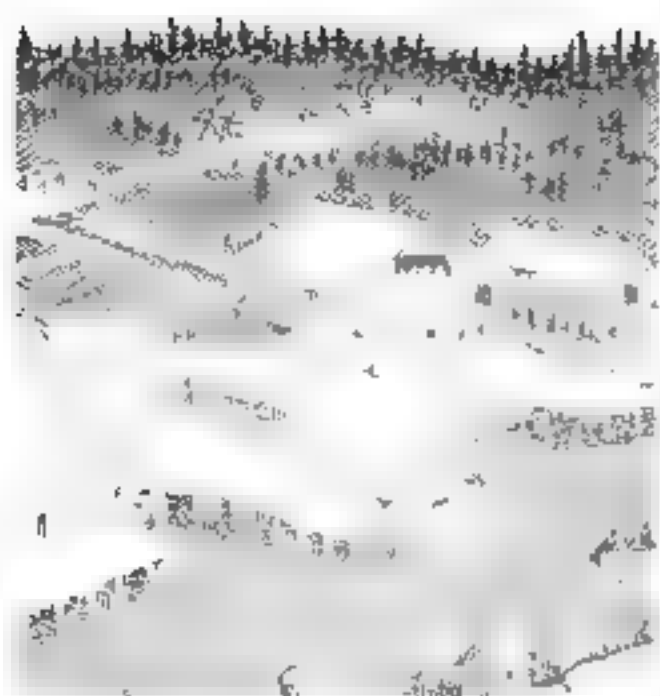
"NORTH."











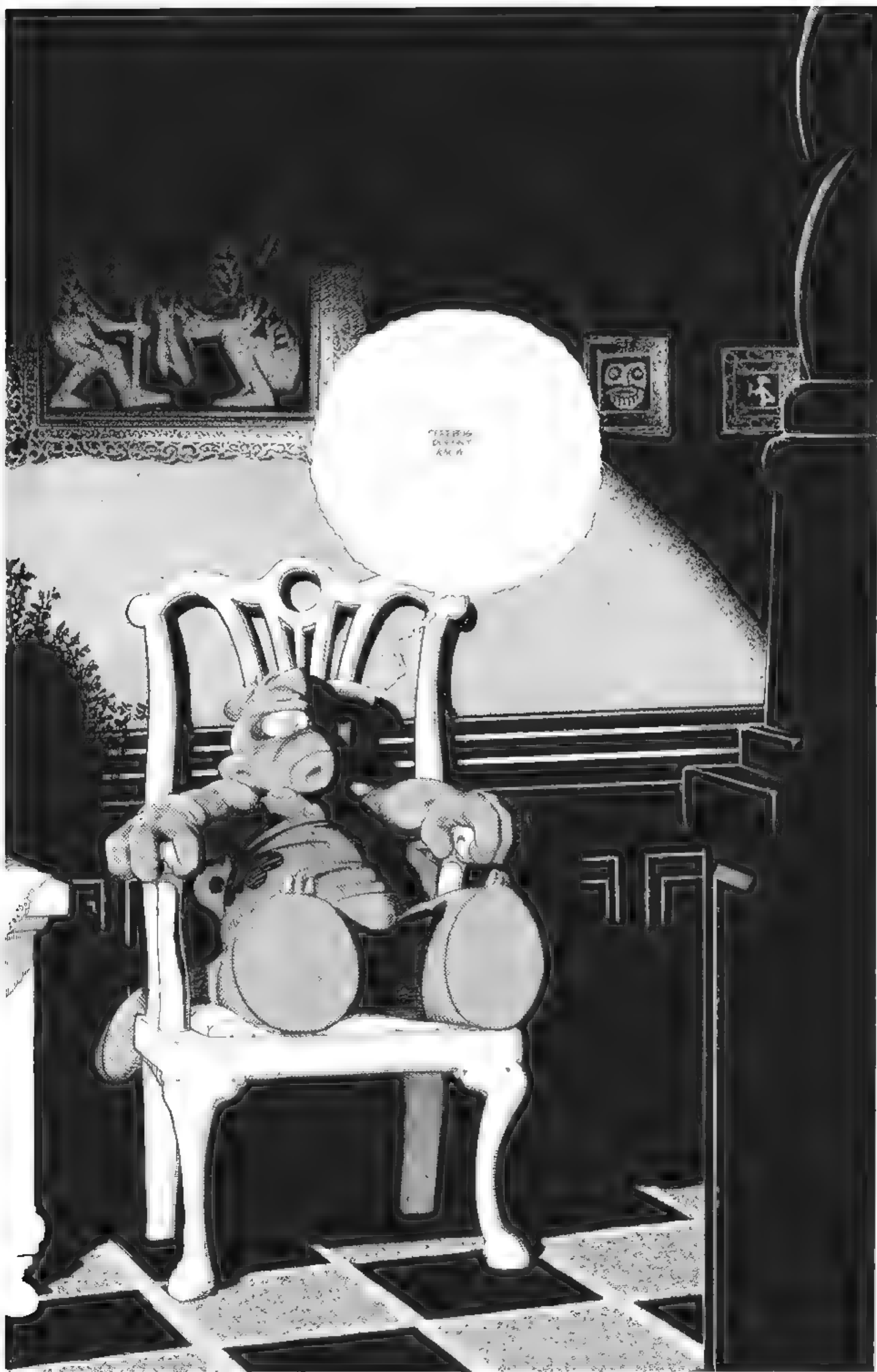




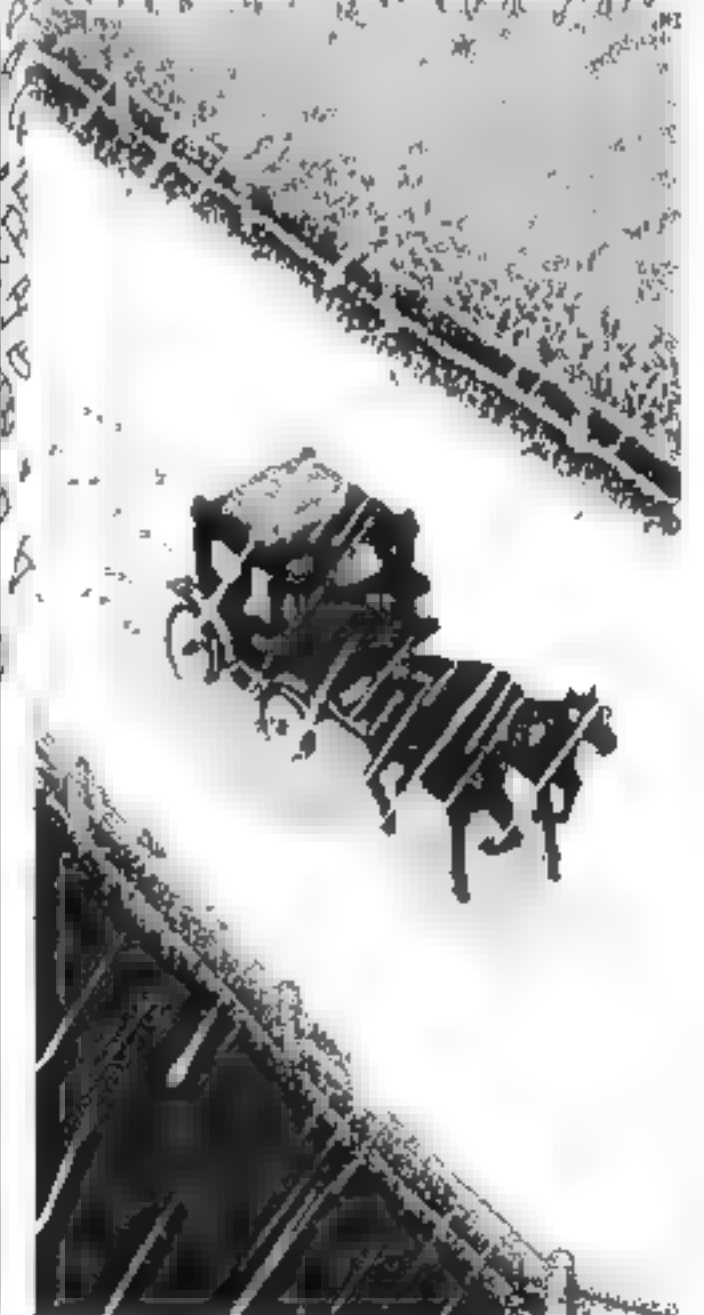
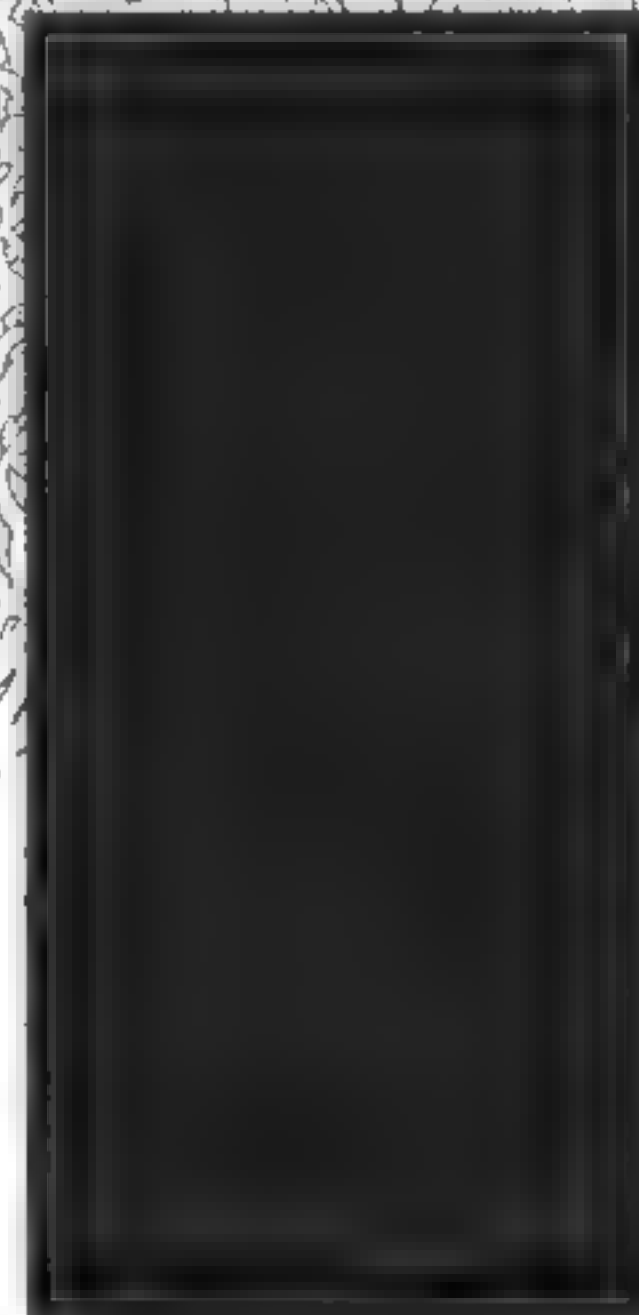








Serv

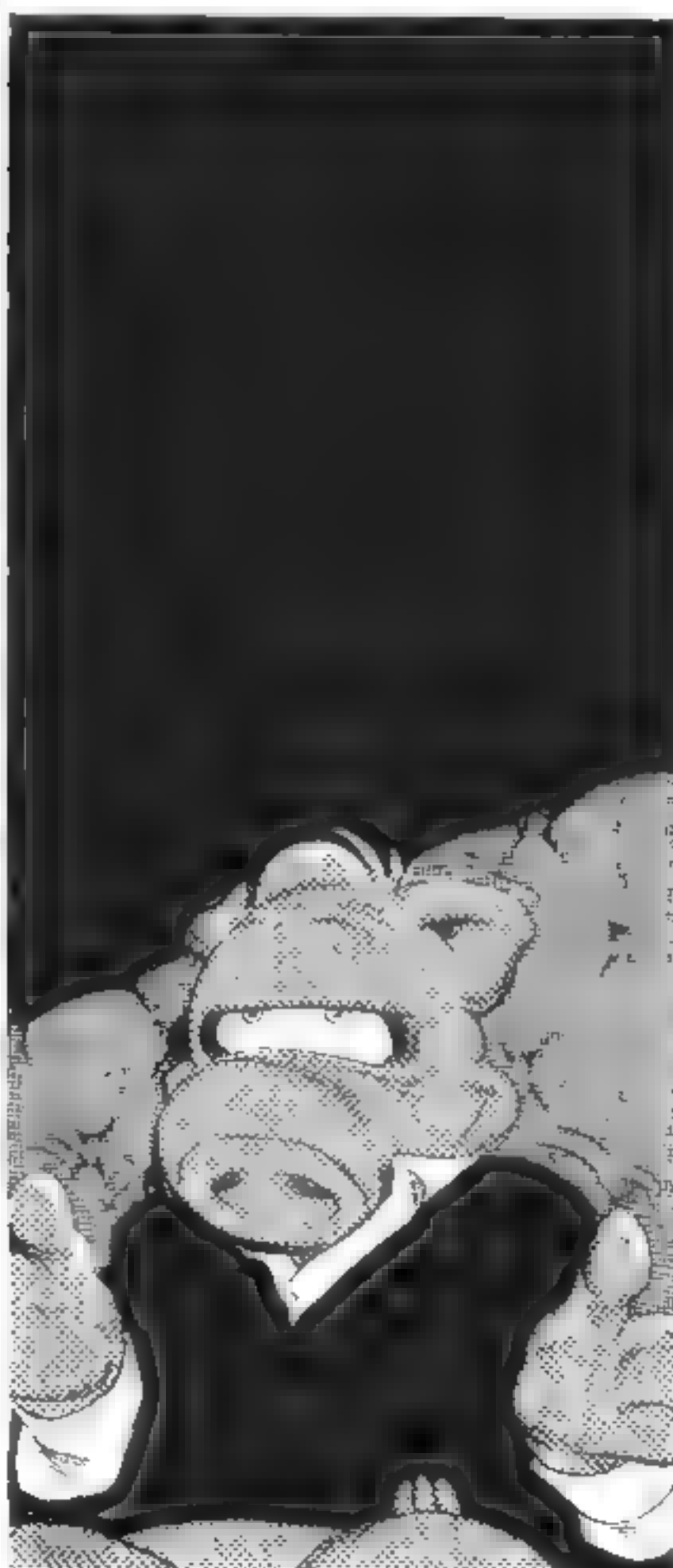
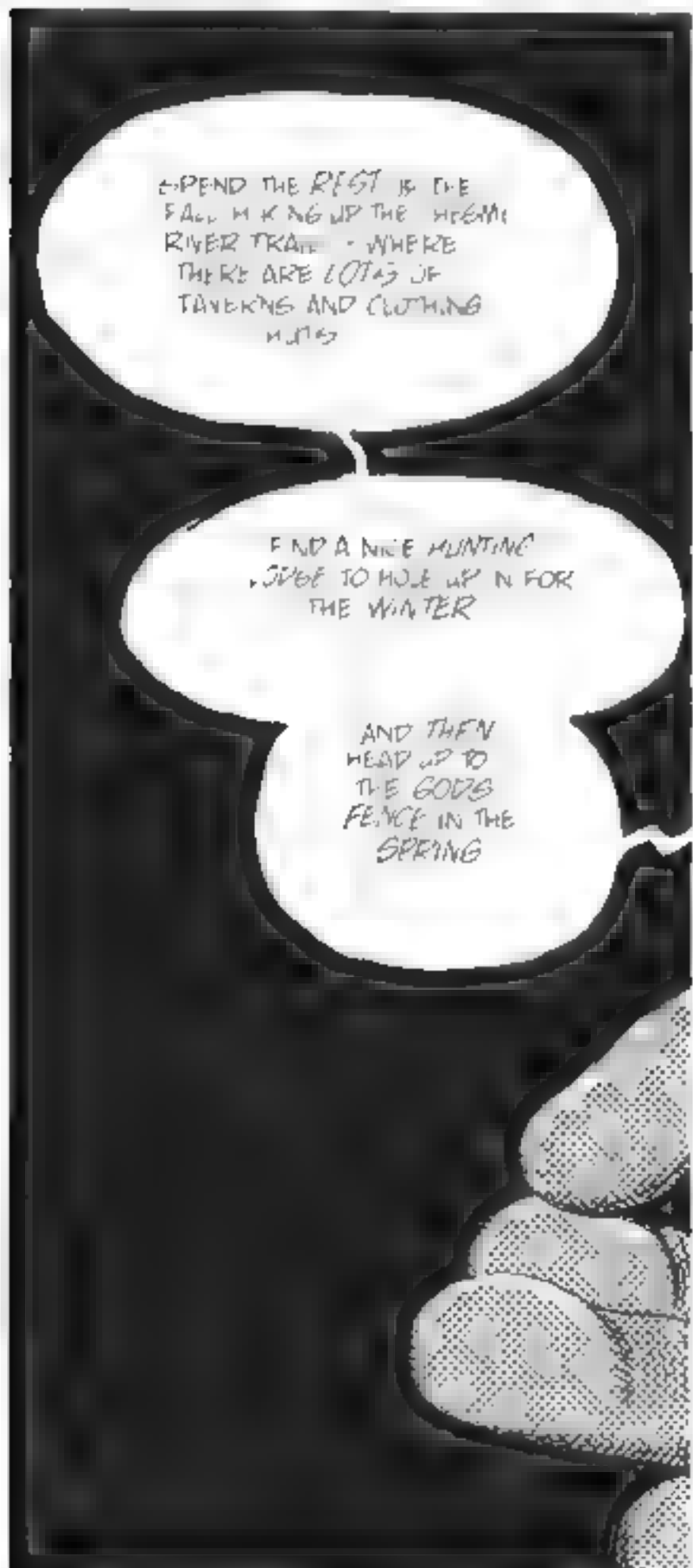
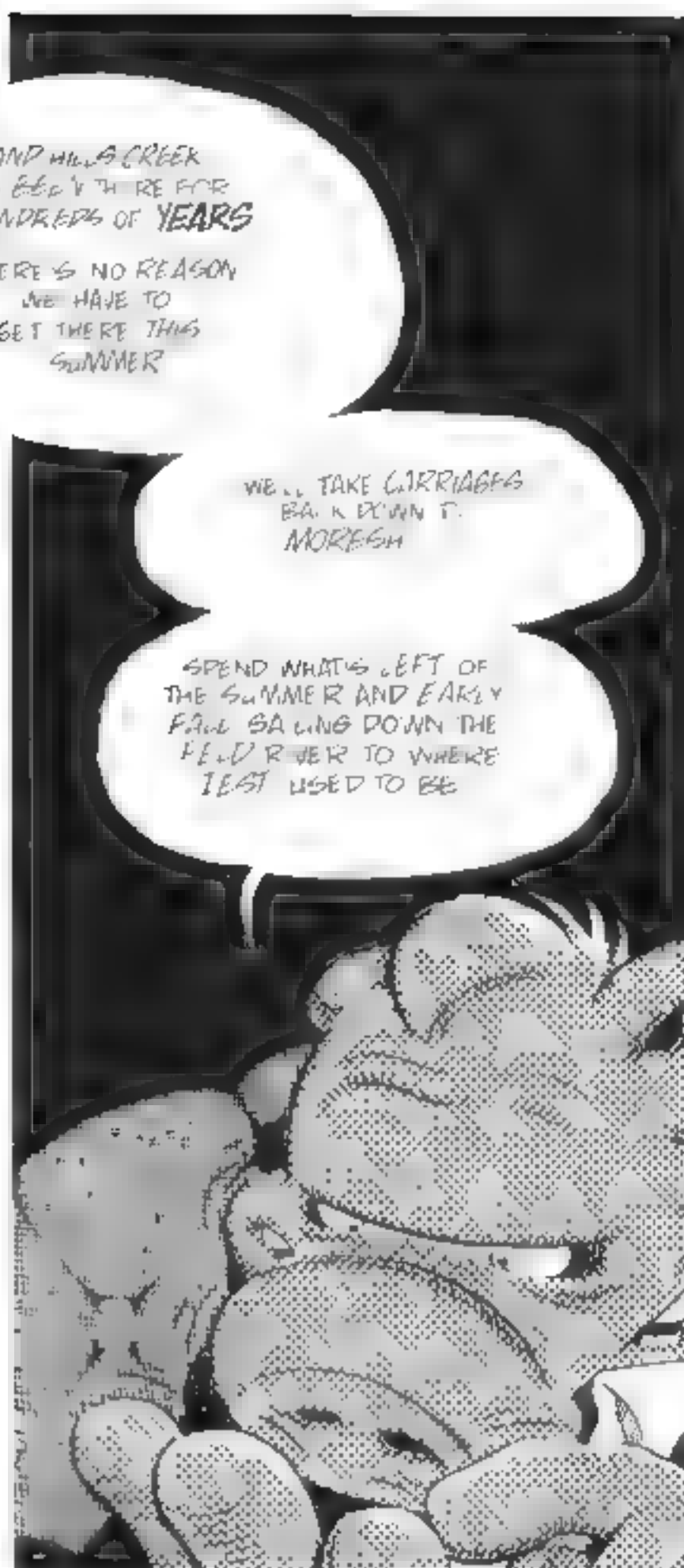


riat











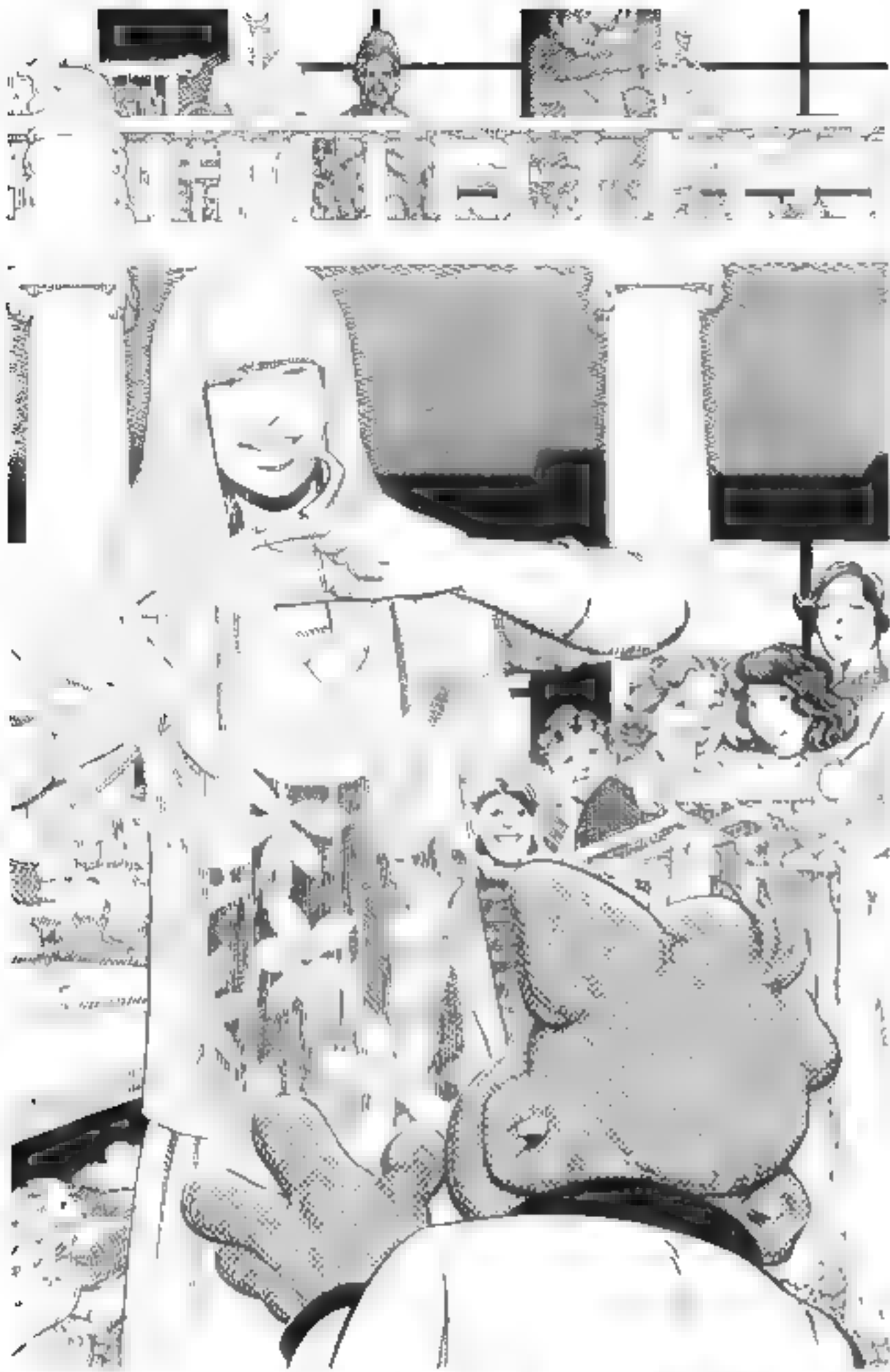


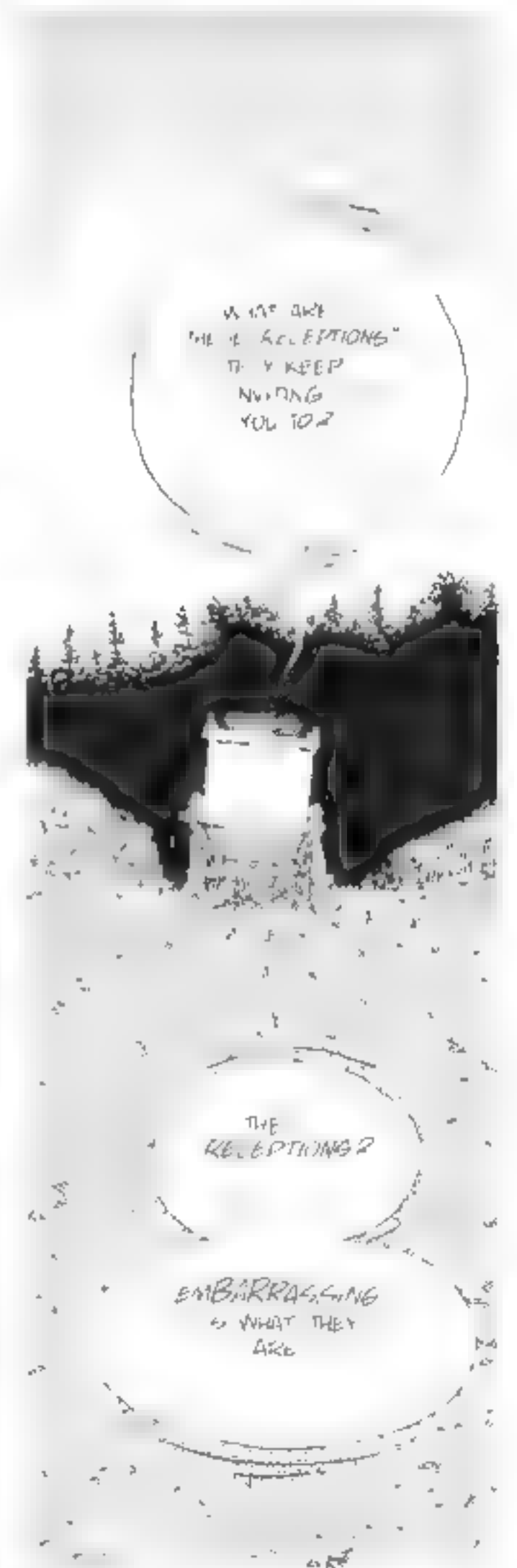
...happy enough for two. You can't be a happy person and as long as you stay that way, you know a lot of

...happy every damn minute or just as long as you've got her as long as you want her

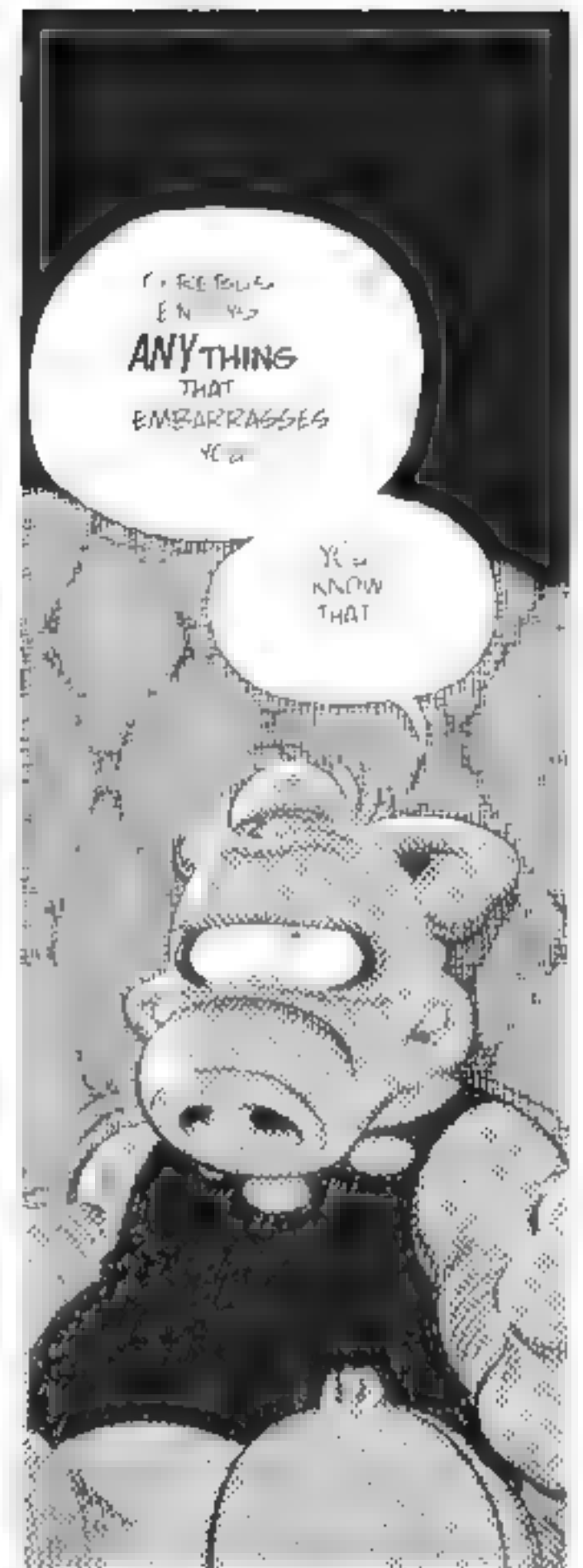
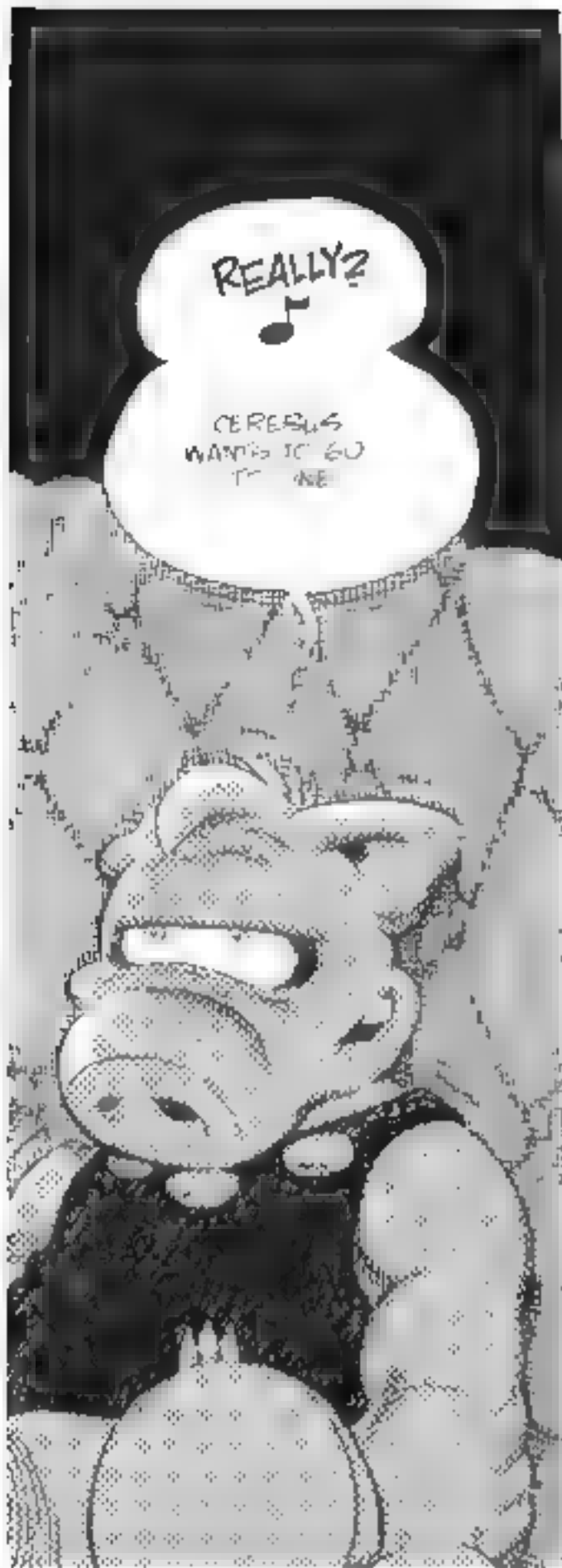




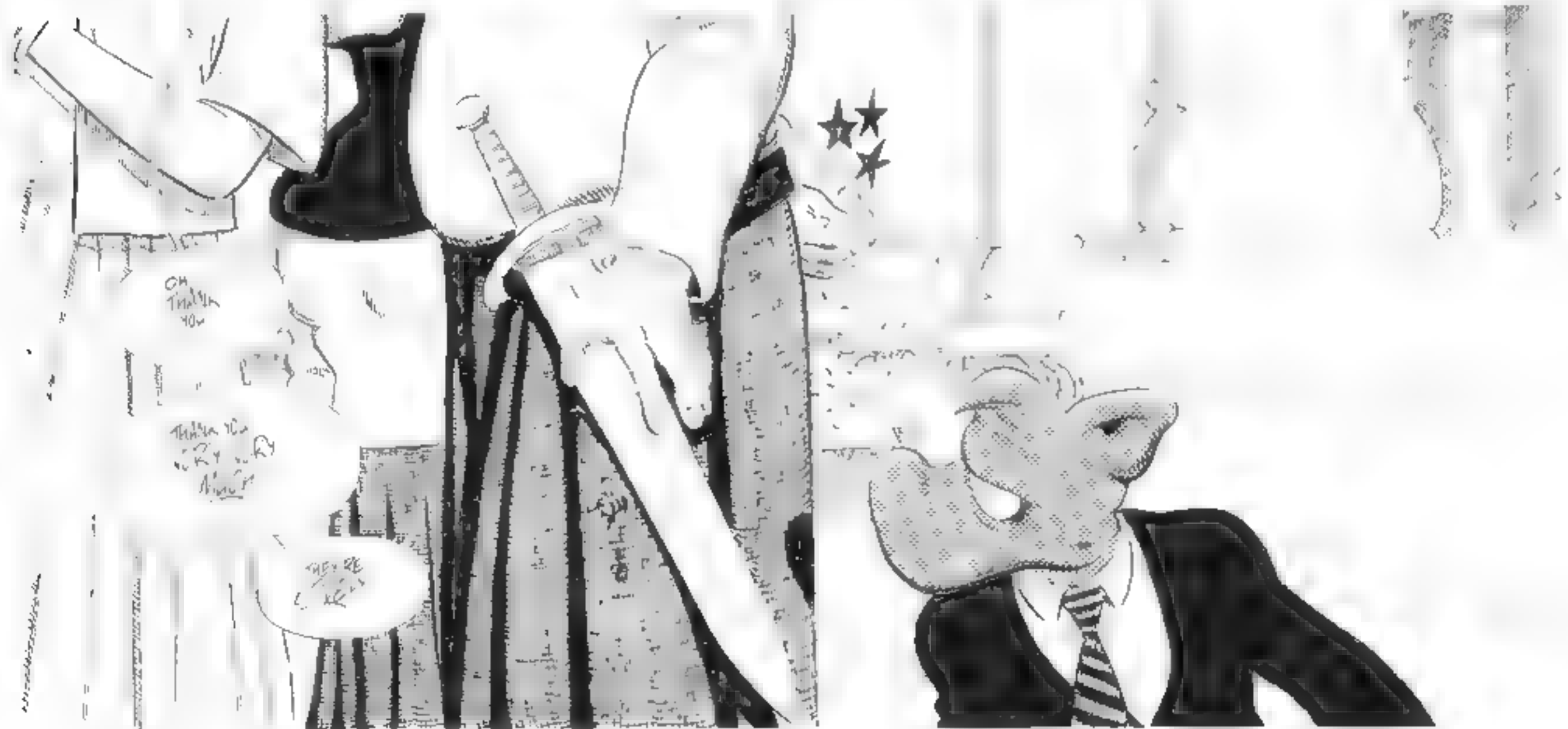




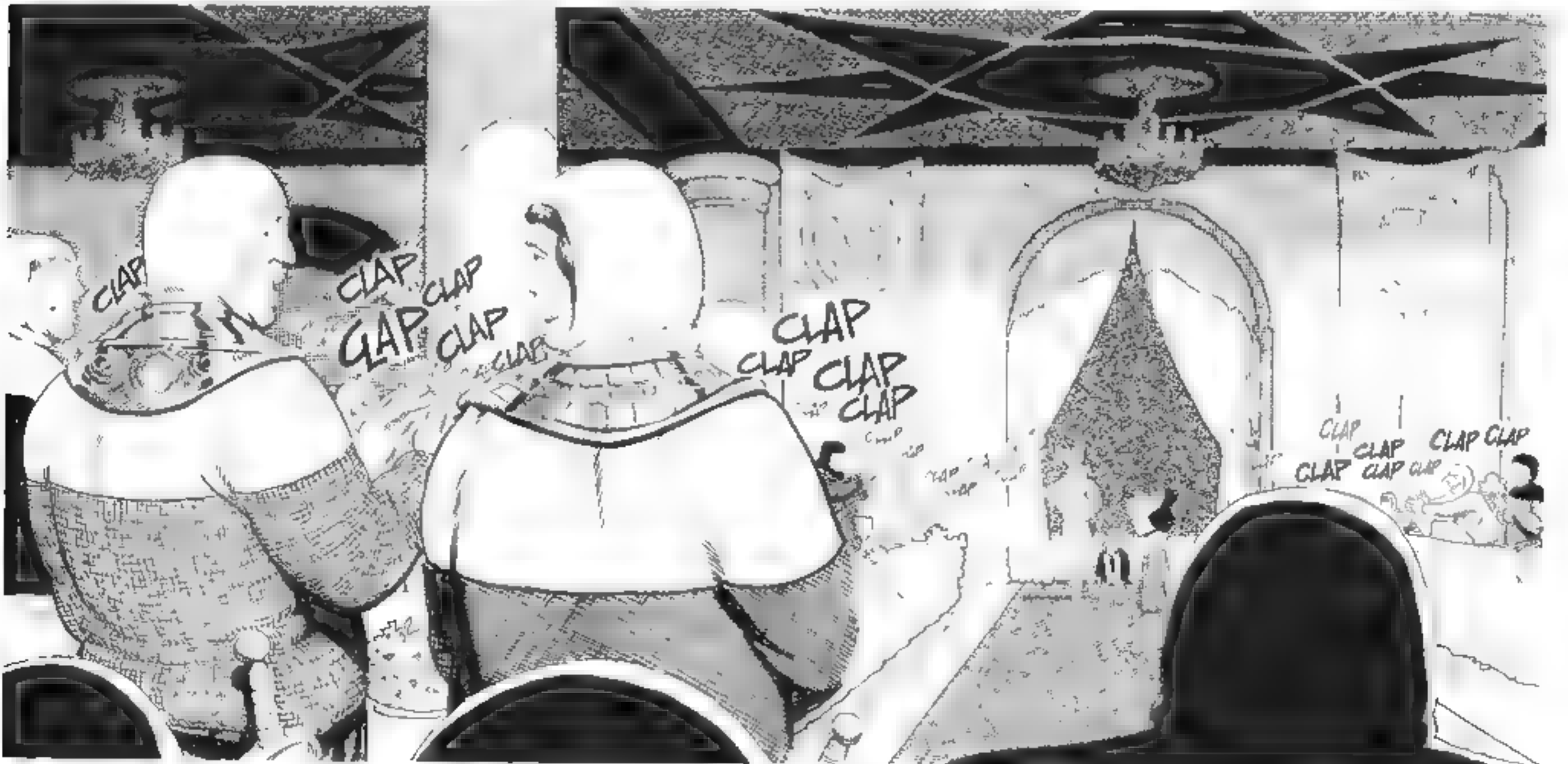














WOULD  
YOU EXCUSE  
US FOR  
JUST  
A  
MOMENT?

THANK YOU  
I'LL JUST BE  
A SECOND

CERTAINLY

CLAP  
CLAP CLAP

CLAP  
CLAP CLAP

CERTAINLY  
LET ME  
TAKE TIME  
FOR YOU

CLAP  
CLAP

CLAP CLAP CLAP  
CLAP CLAP CLAP  
CLAP CLAP CLAP



CLAP? CLAP?  
CLAP? CLAP?  
CLAP? CLAP?  
CLAP?

HAD  
ENOUGH?

OR DO YOU WANT TO  
STICK AROUND FOR THE  
"RAREST BLOSSOM"  
TO GRACE OUR FAIR  
COMMUNITY  
SPEECHES?

NAY!

NAY

CEREBUS COULDN'T  
GET TO THAT CRAP  
AND DIGEST A CUCUMBER  
SALAD AT THE  
SAME TIME



HA!



CEREBUS IS GOING  
BACK TO THE SHEPHERD  
AND DOG FOR A FEW TOO  
MANY ALES...

REMEMBER NOW--  
YOU LEFT FIRST  
GO

SO  
CEREBUS  
OWES YOU  
THREE BACK-  
RUPS

QAP?  
CLAP?

"YES,  
DEAR."

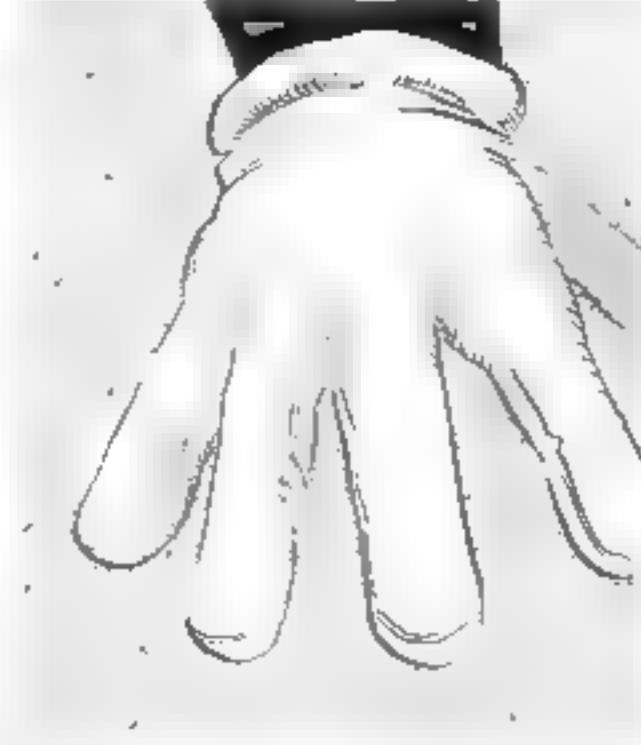
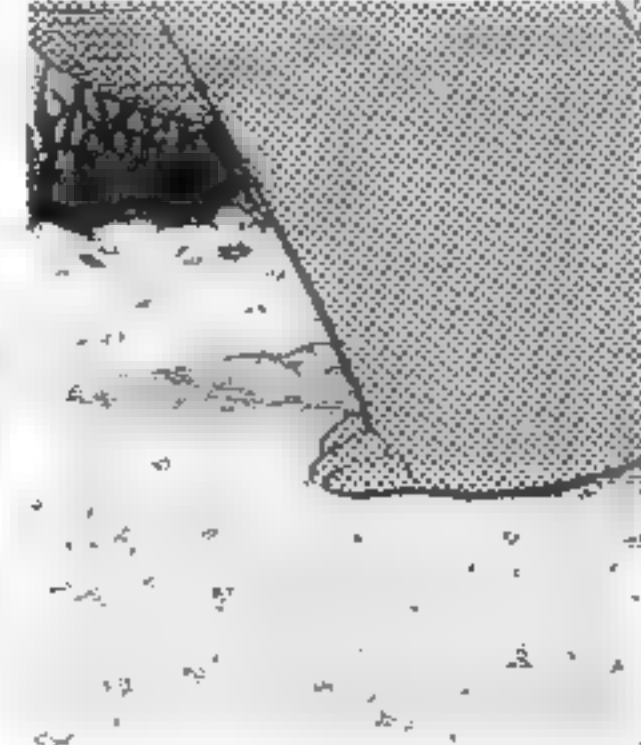
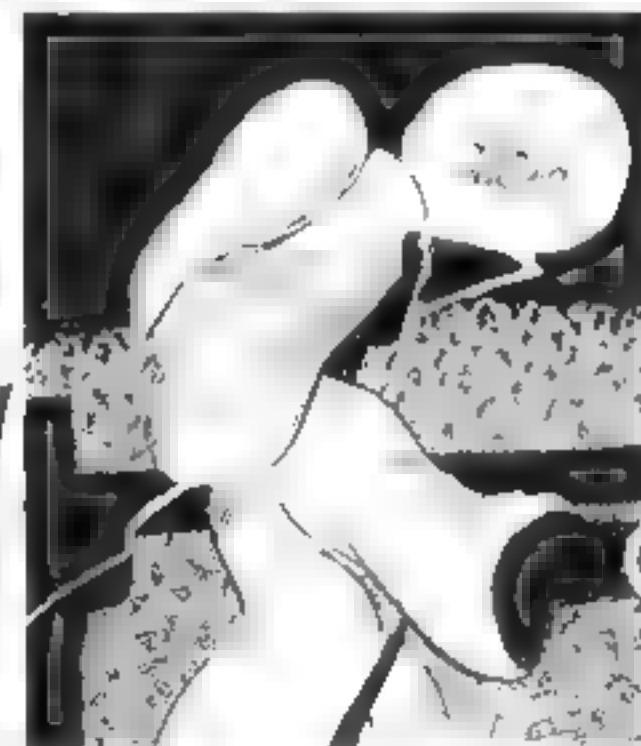
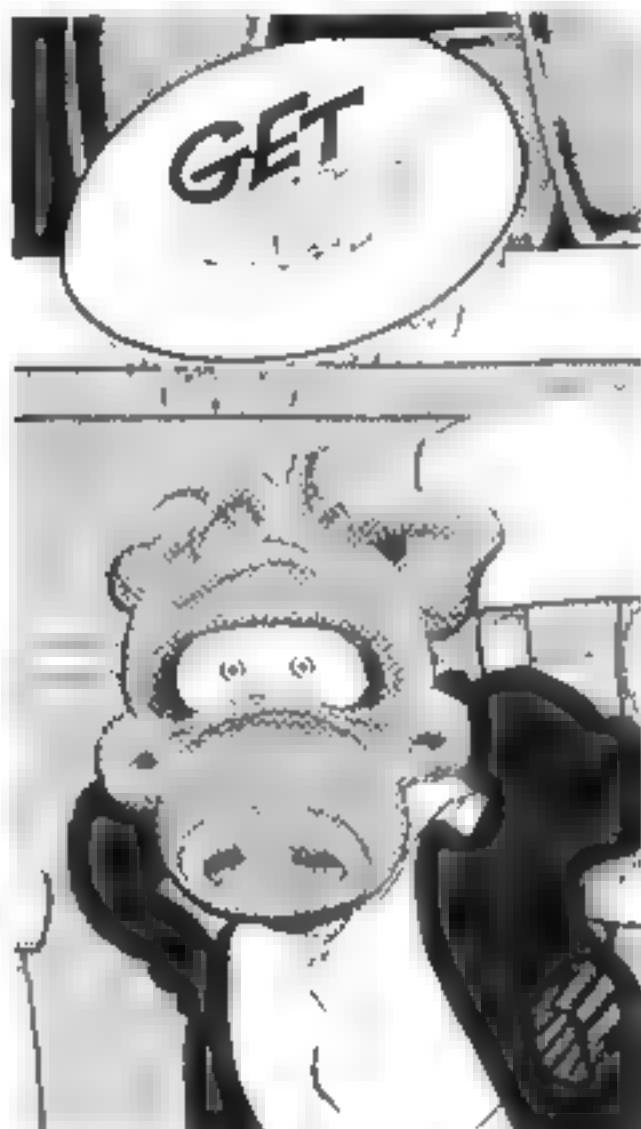
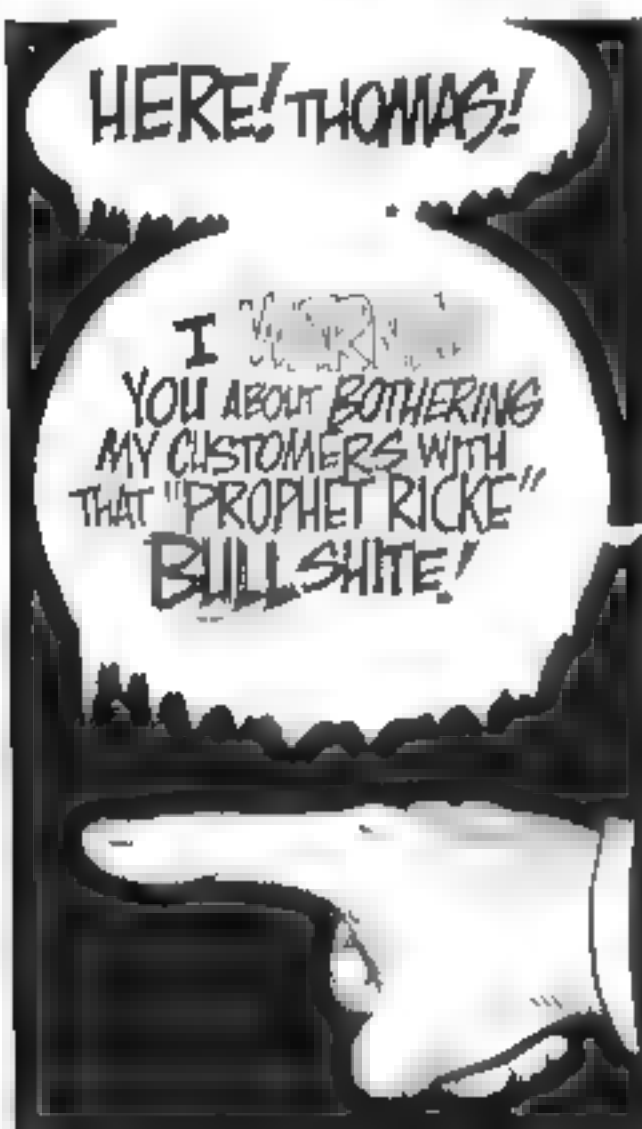
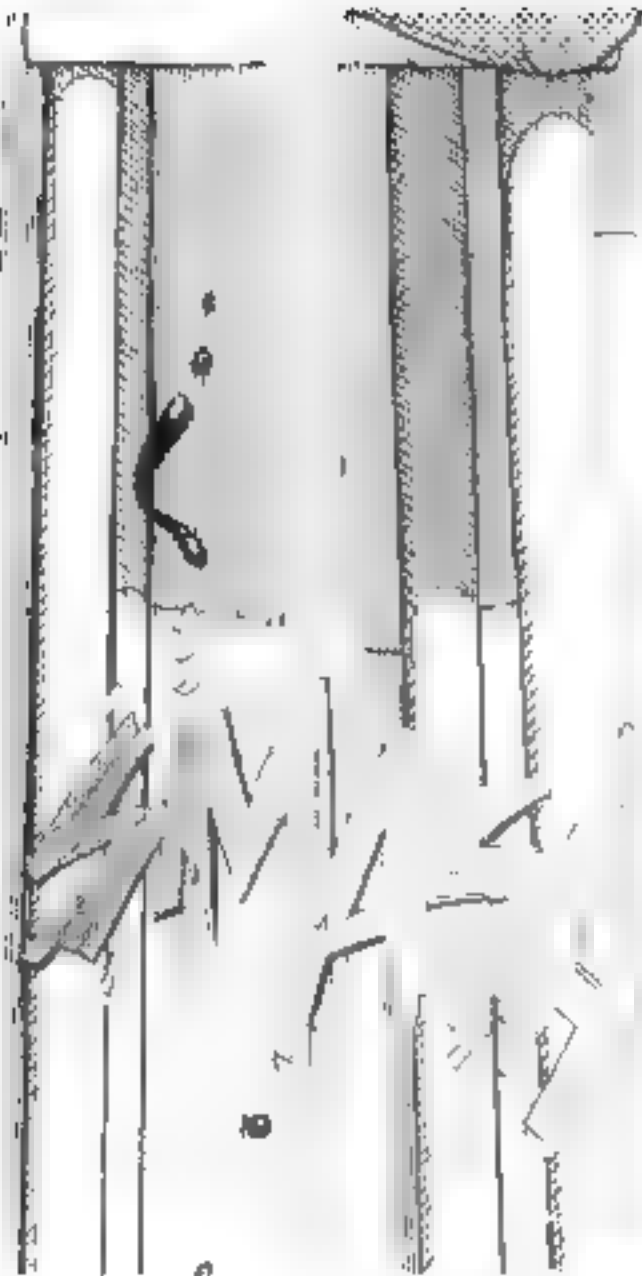






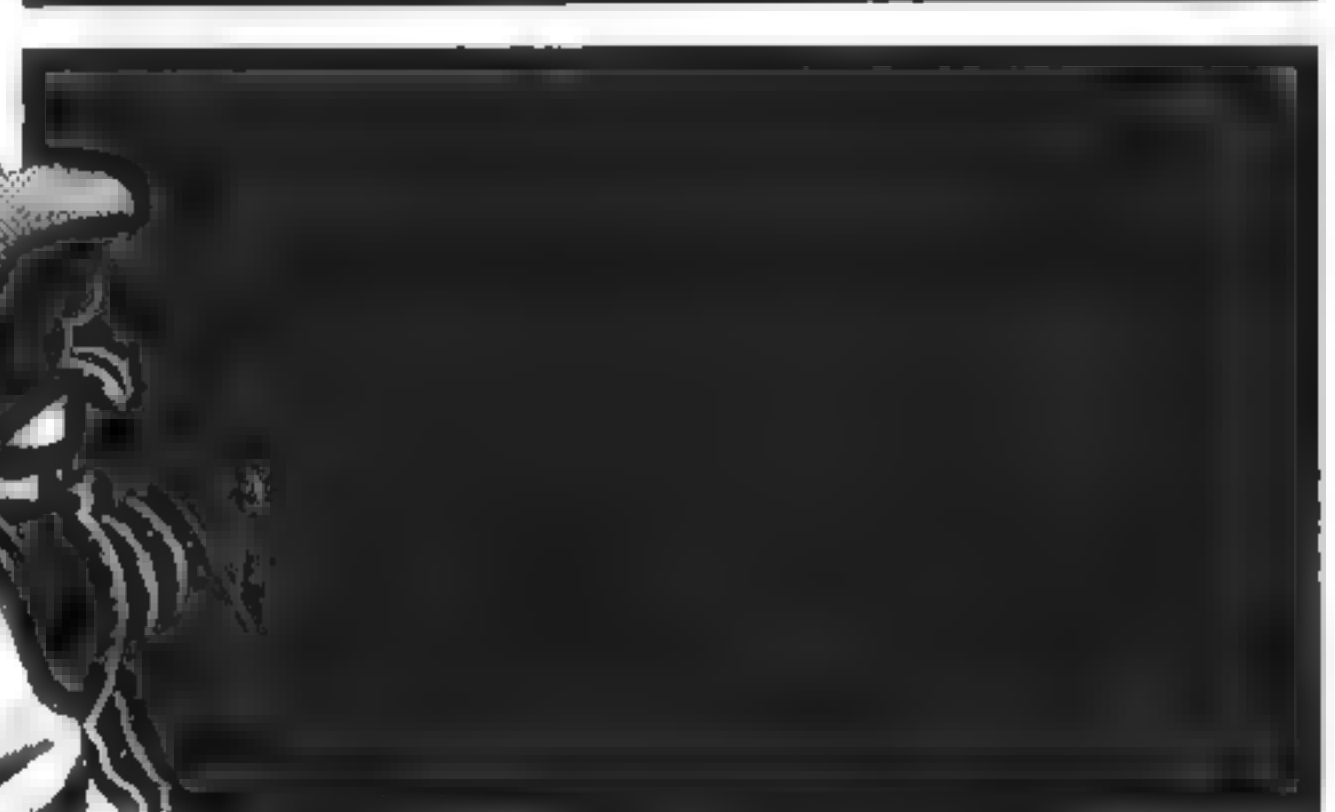
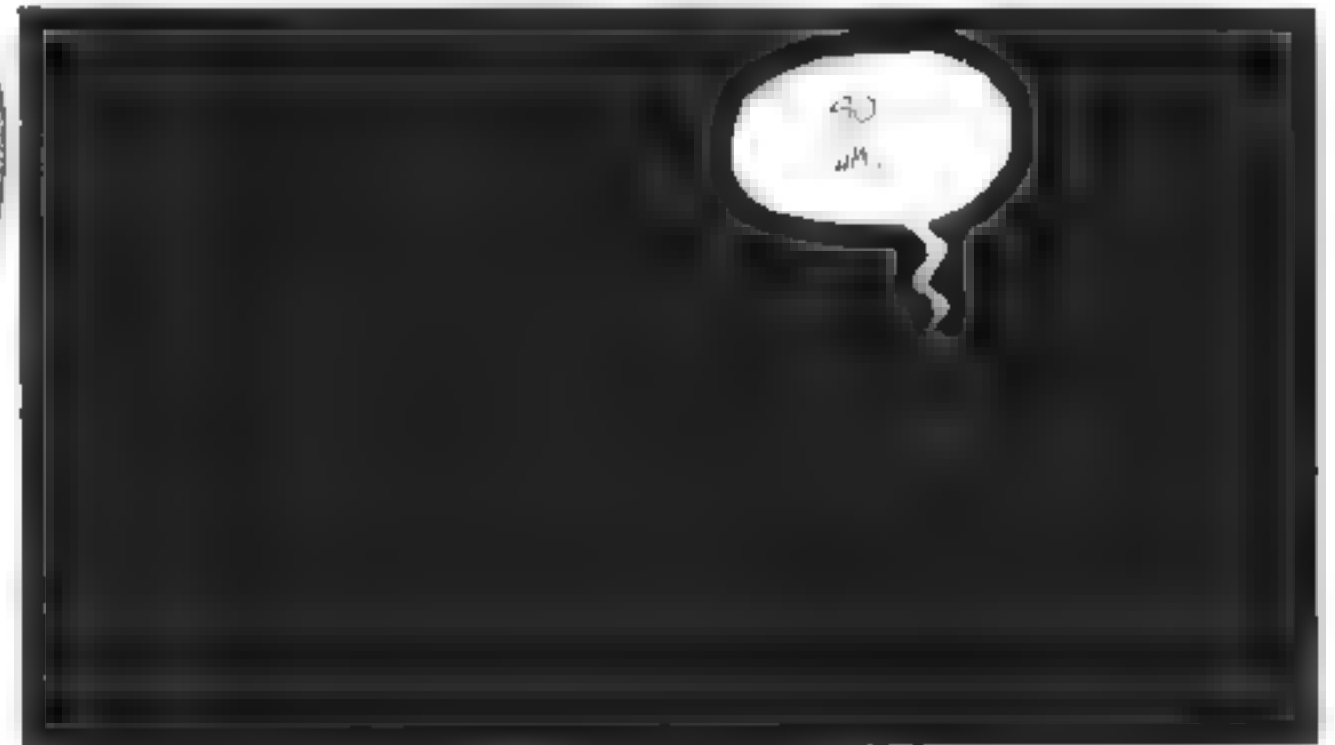
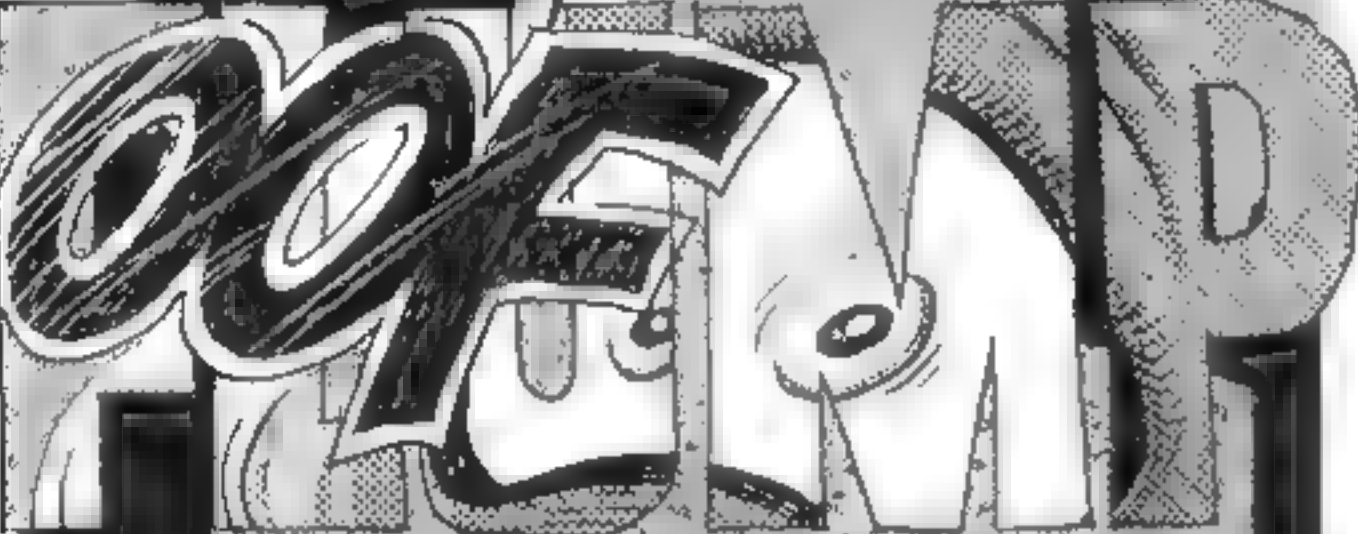


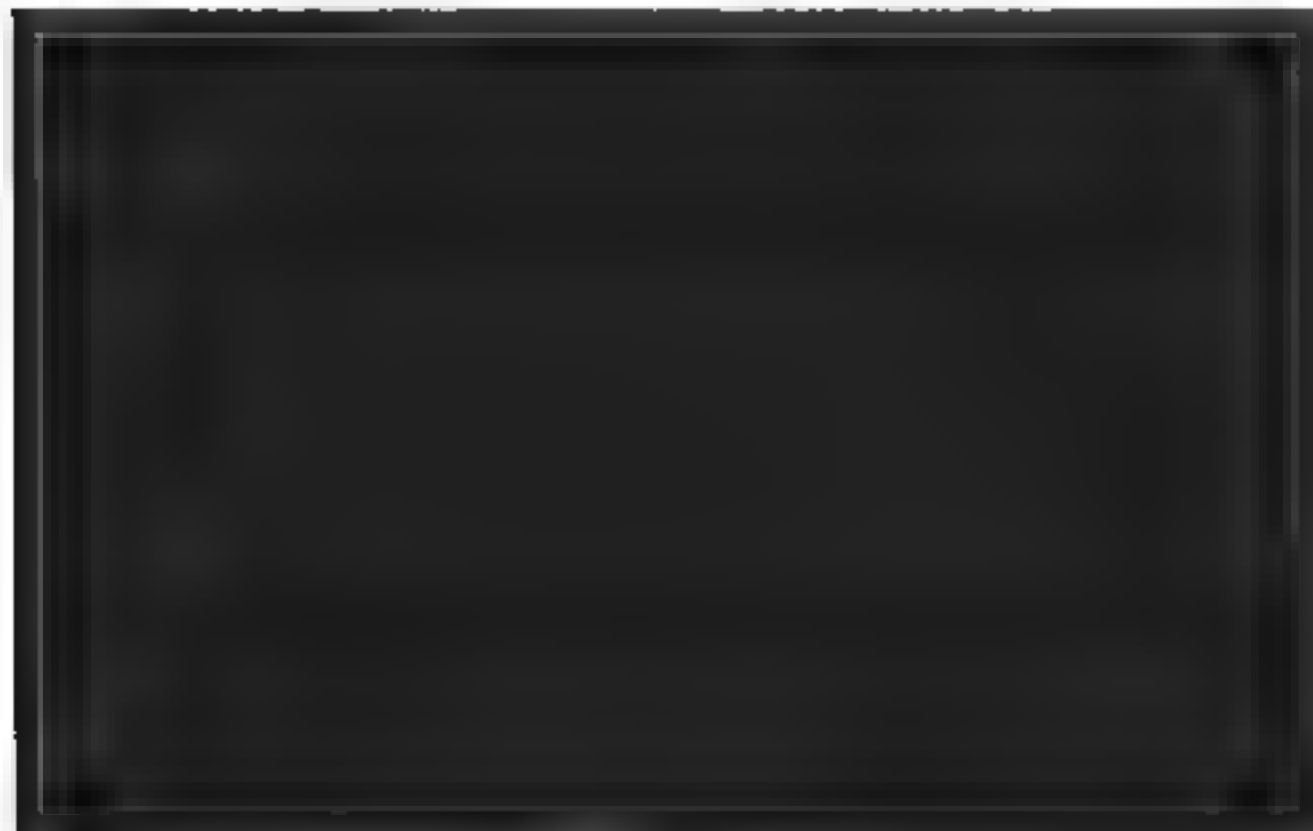
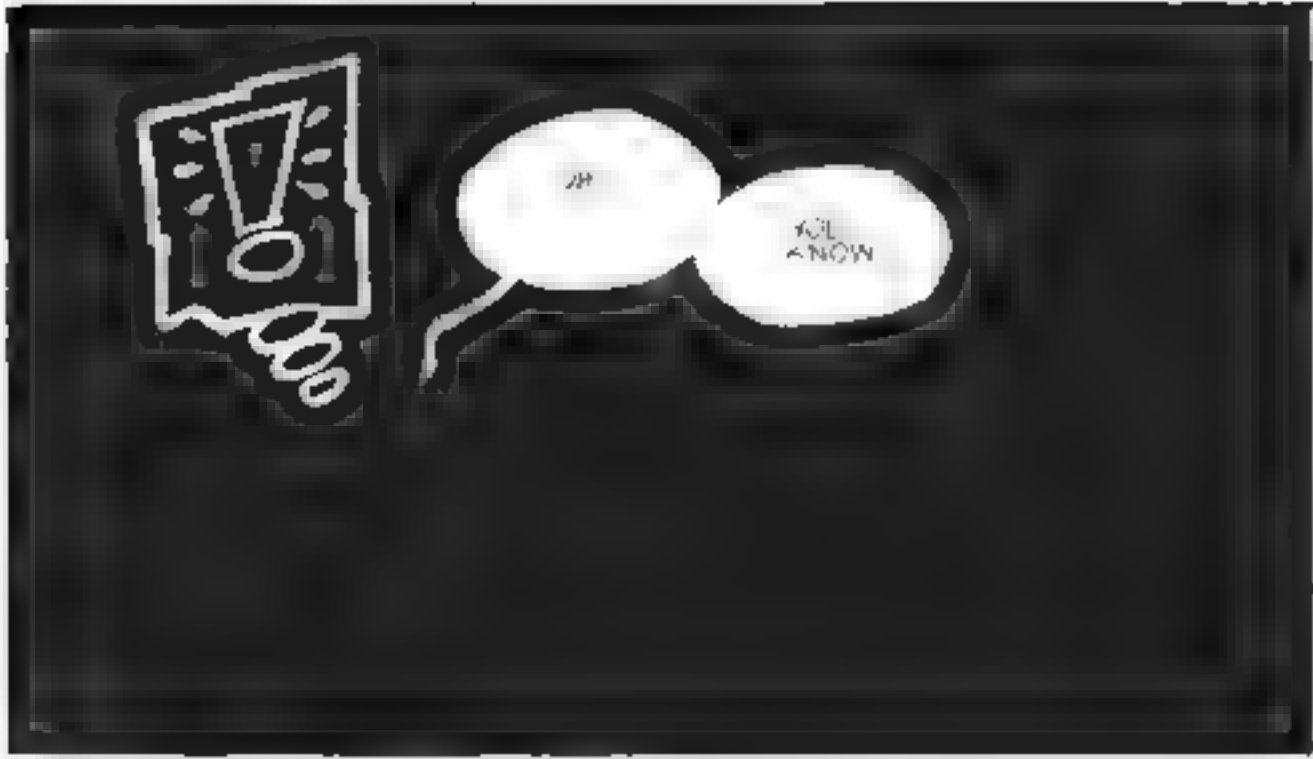




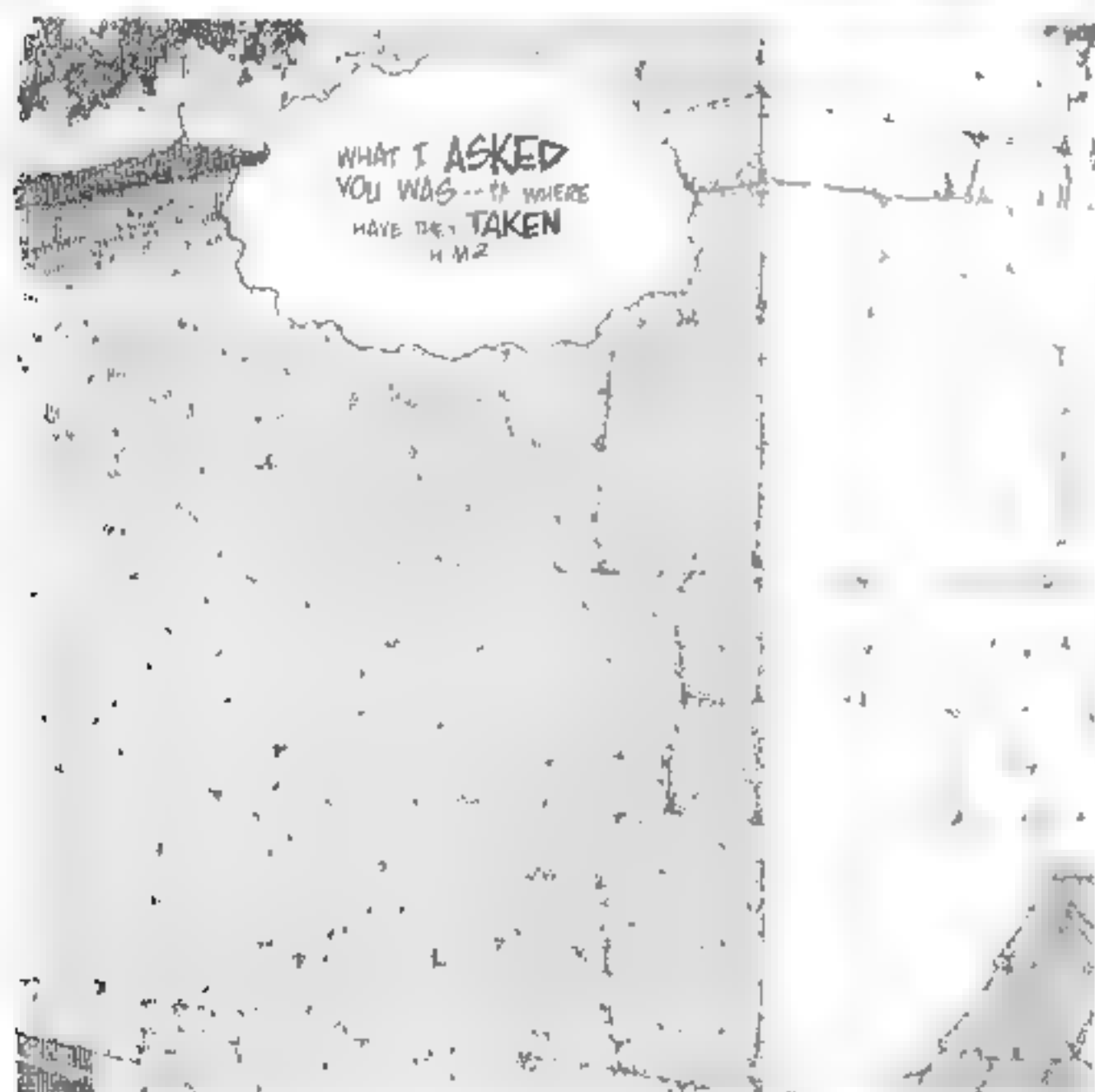








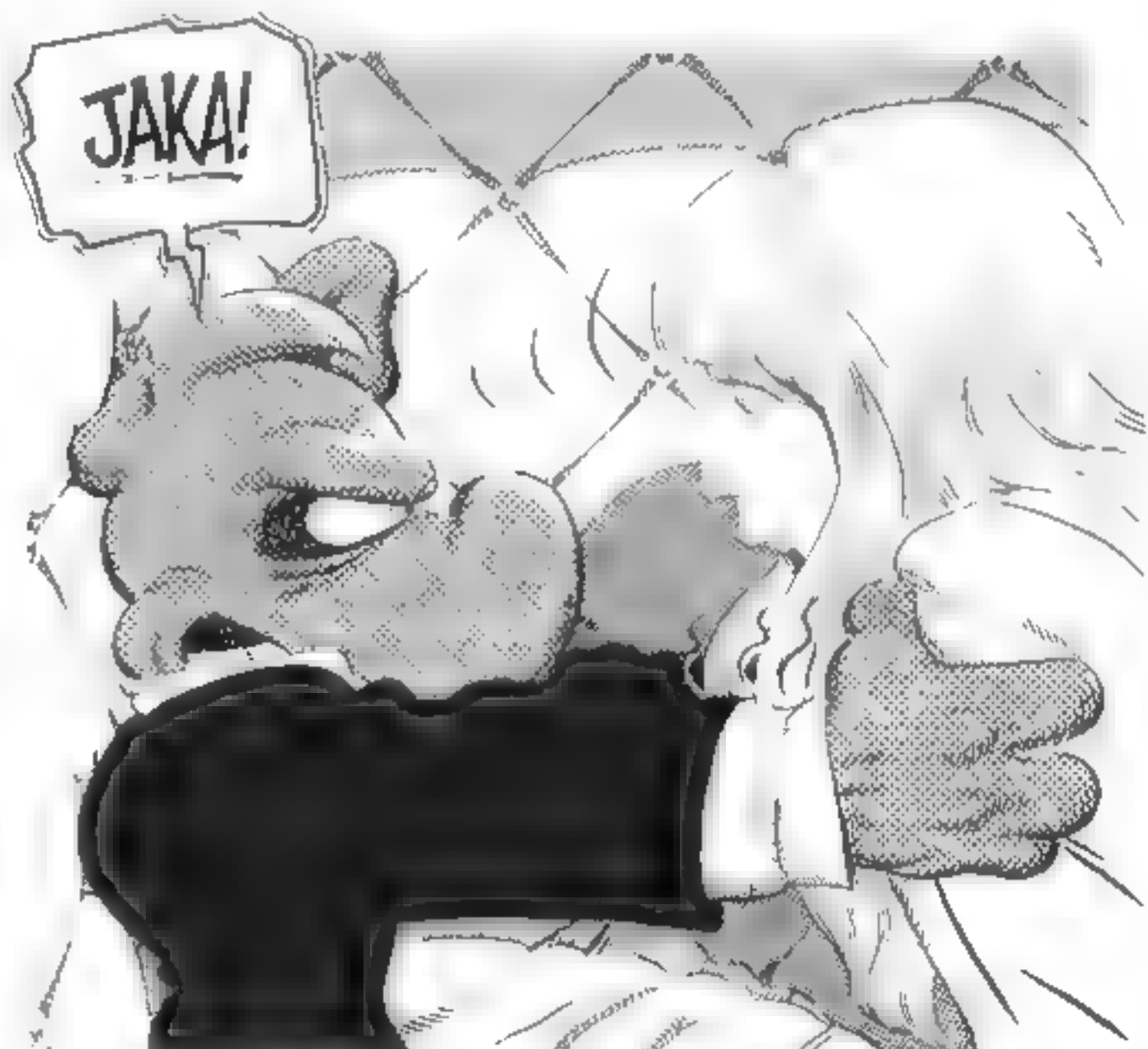















(WHAT HAPPENED  
TO THE WOMAN  
I TALKED TO?)

(SHE DIDN'T  
ASK)

(SHE DOESN'T  
WANT TO KNOW)

"I'M SORRY WE'RE  
A LITTLE GETTING TO  
THE POINTING OUT TODAY  
H.A."

THAT'S OKAY  Mwah!

(IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT  
THAT THERE WAS A WOMAN  
LYING IN THE LANEWAY IN  
FRONT OF THE SHEPHERD  
AND DOG SPLIT OPEN  
LIKE A...

WELL, ALL RIGHT...  
IT PROBABLY WAS  
YOUR FAULT--but

"OH  
THAT'S OKAY..."  Mwah!"

JUST KEEP  
SMILING WITH THE  
UNHAPPY ONES YOU  
HAVE TO BE HAPPY  
ENOUGH FOR  
TWO

"OH,  
THAT'S OKAY..."  Mwah!"

"JUST BE HAPPY  
EVERY DAMN  
MINUTE OF YOUR  
WAKING LIFE  
AND YOU'VE GOT  
HER FOR AS LONG  
AS YOU WANT  
HER"

"OH  
THAT'S OKAY..."  Mwah!"







OKAY

WHEN SHE ASKS  
ABOUT CREEBUS  
WHY I SAID "SOMEONE  
GOT THEMSELVES L.A."

"GASP  
WHO?"

(SHE SAID)

"YOU TALKED  
TO SOMEONE  
LAST NIGHT"

(WHY  
CALMER)

"YOU TALKED TO SOMEONE  
LAST NIGHT - CREEBUS  
DIDN'T KNOW WHO AND  
CREEBUS DIDN'T WANT TO  
KNOW WHO AND WE  
ARE EVEN AT L.A."

"CREEBUS DIDN'T WANT  
TO TALK ABOUT IT SO  
I WASN'T CAREFUL  
ABOUT HIM Y I TALK

(SHE GOING TO  
WANT TO TALK  
ABOUT IT)

"CREEBUS DIDN'T  
WANT TO TALK ABOUT  
IT AND WE  
DIDN'T THINK  
WE "

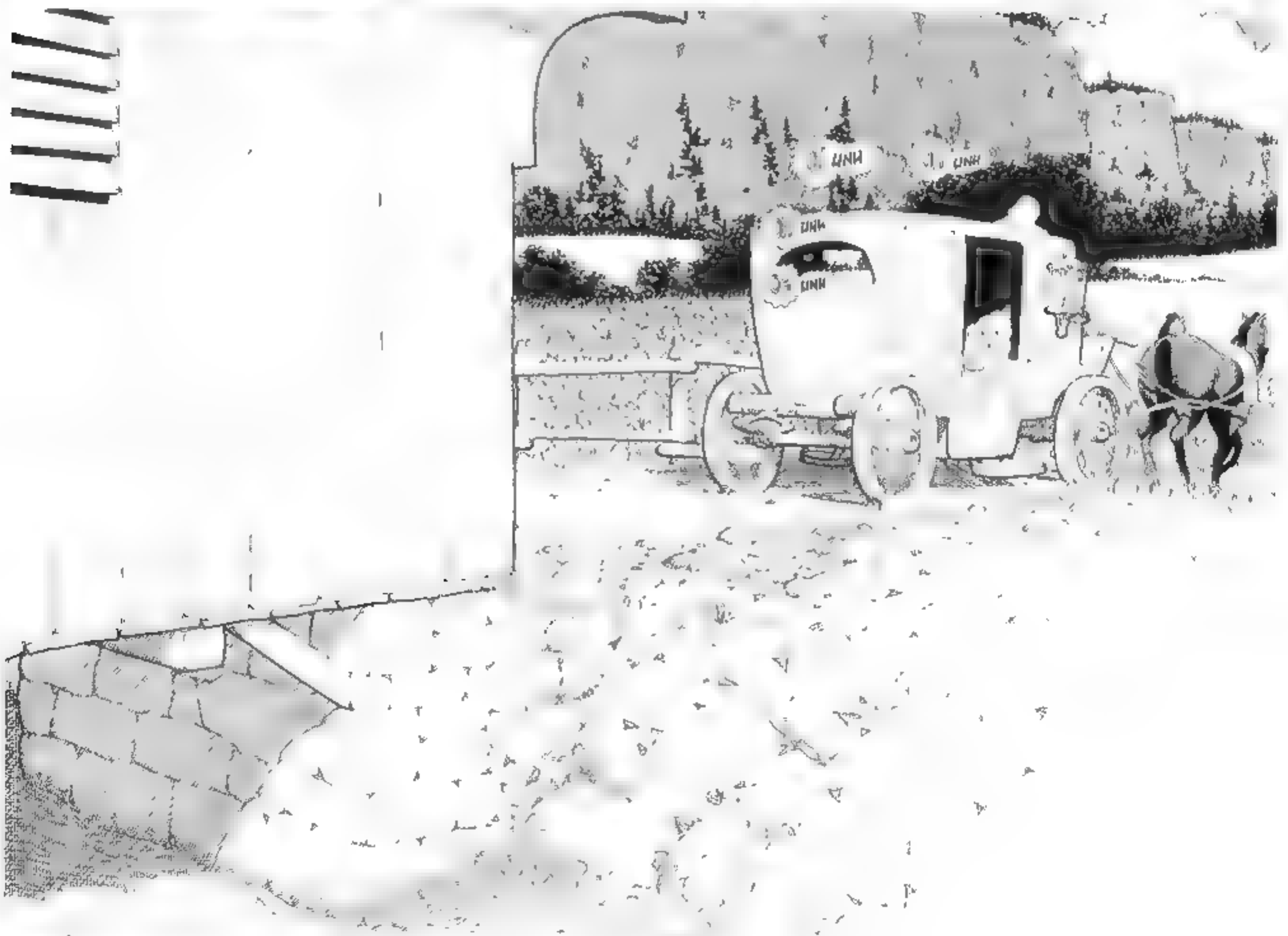
AT THEN SHE 'BE THE  
**LOOK**

"SHOULD  
TALK ABOUT  
IT "

(SHE THAT  
COULD...)

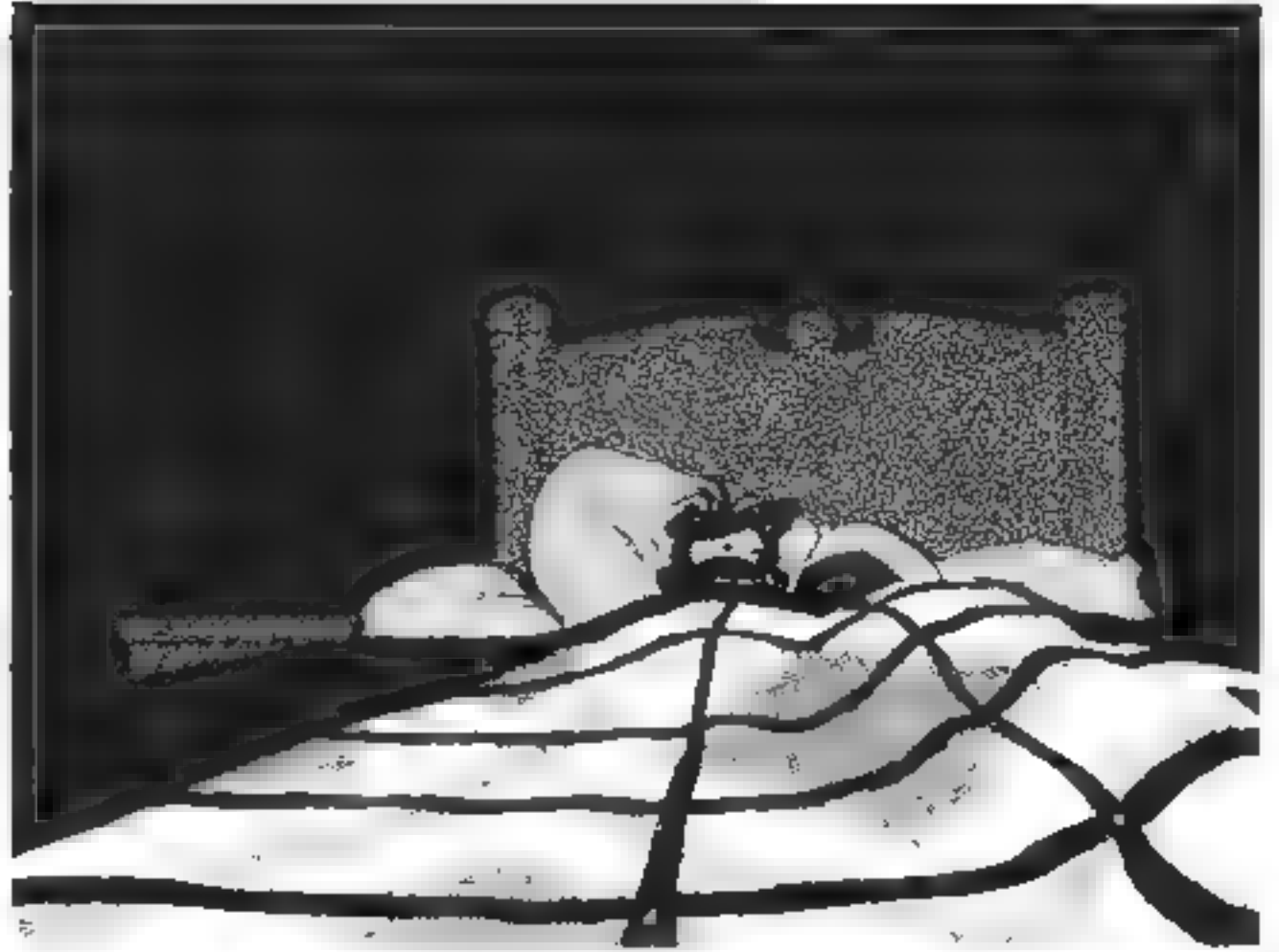
THE  
KISSING  
BRIDGE  
A.D.N.



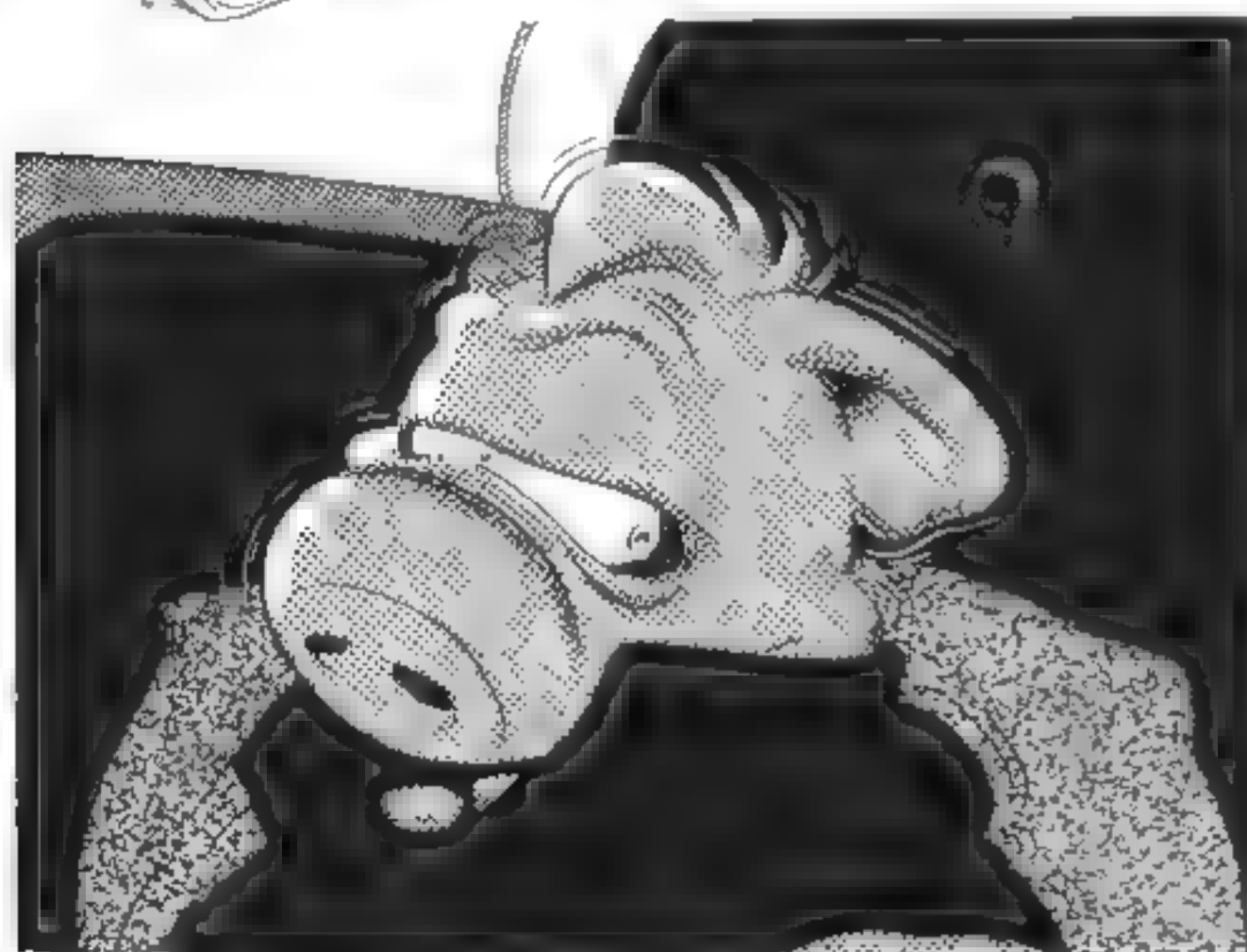




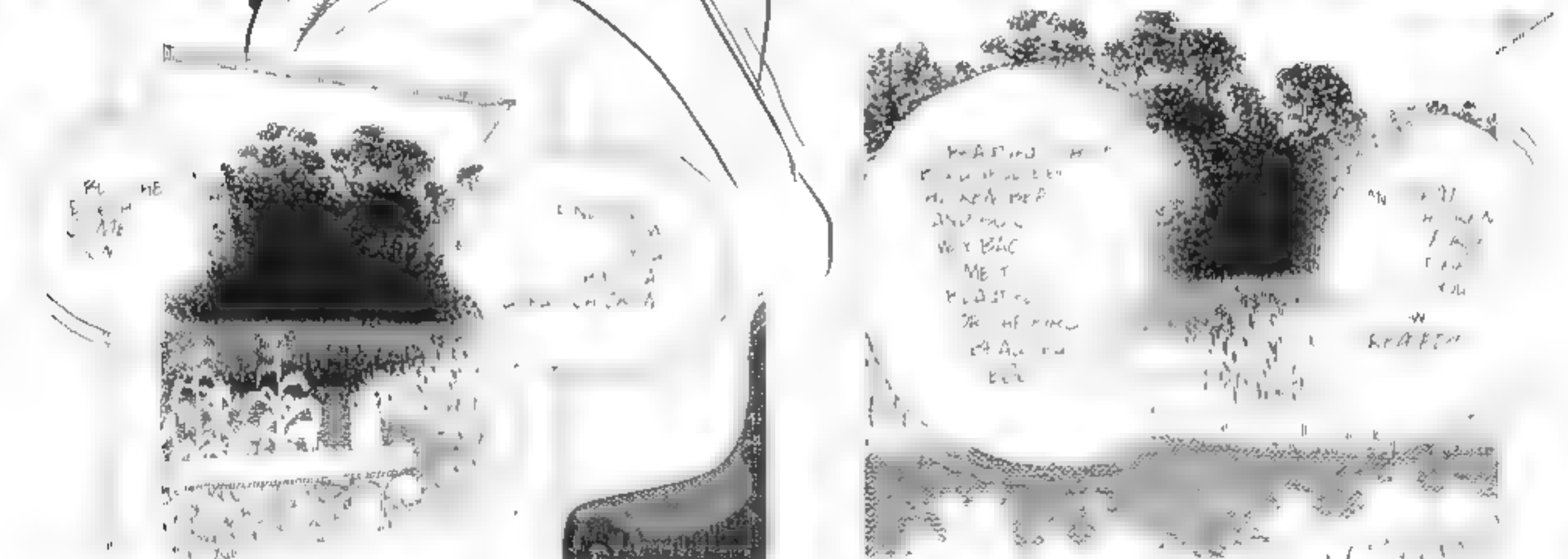




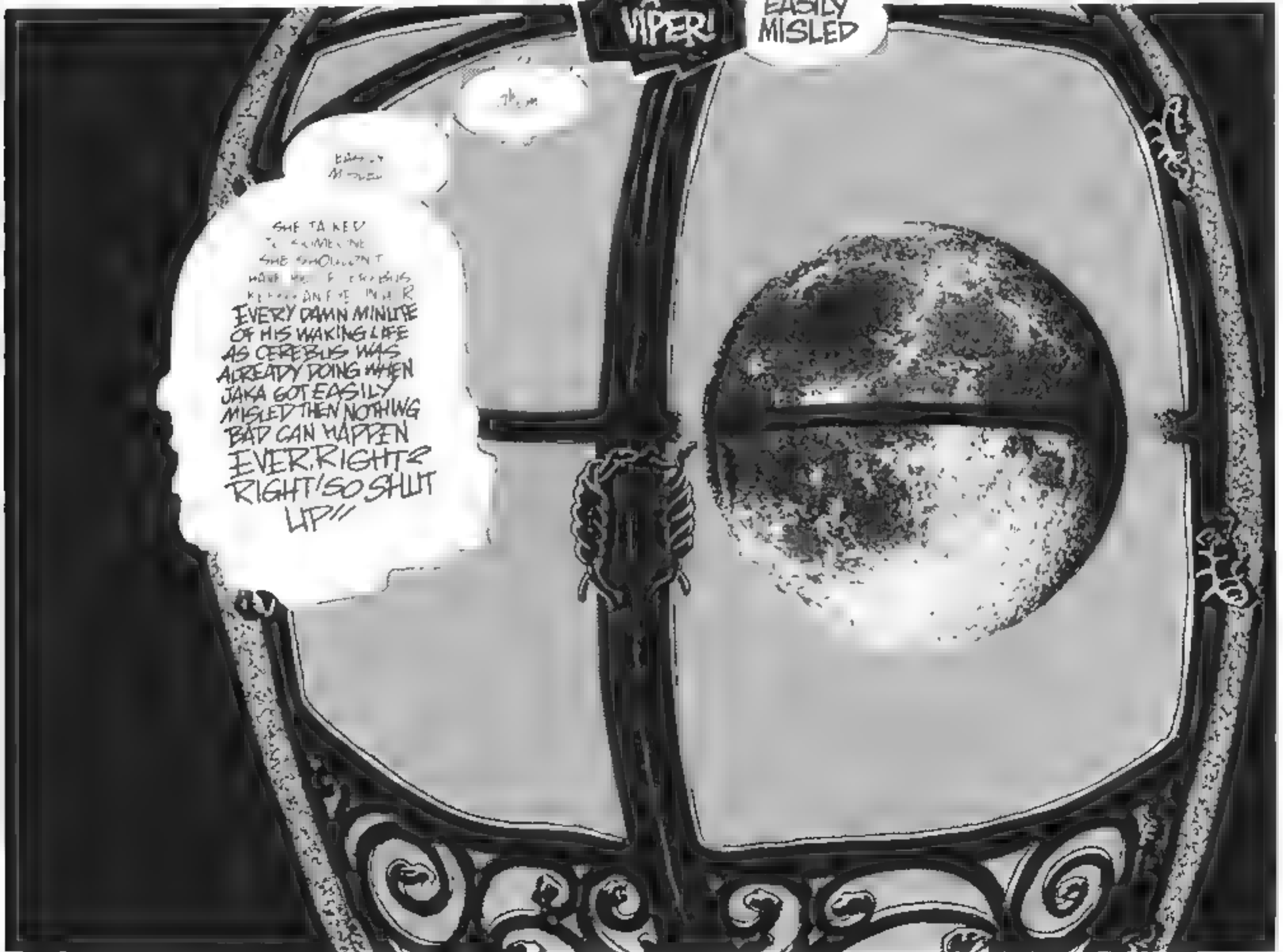




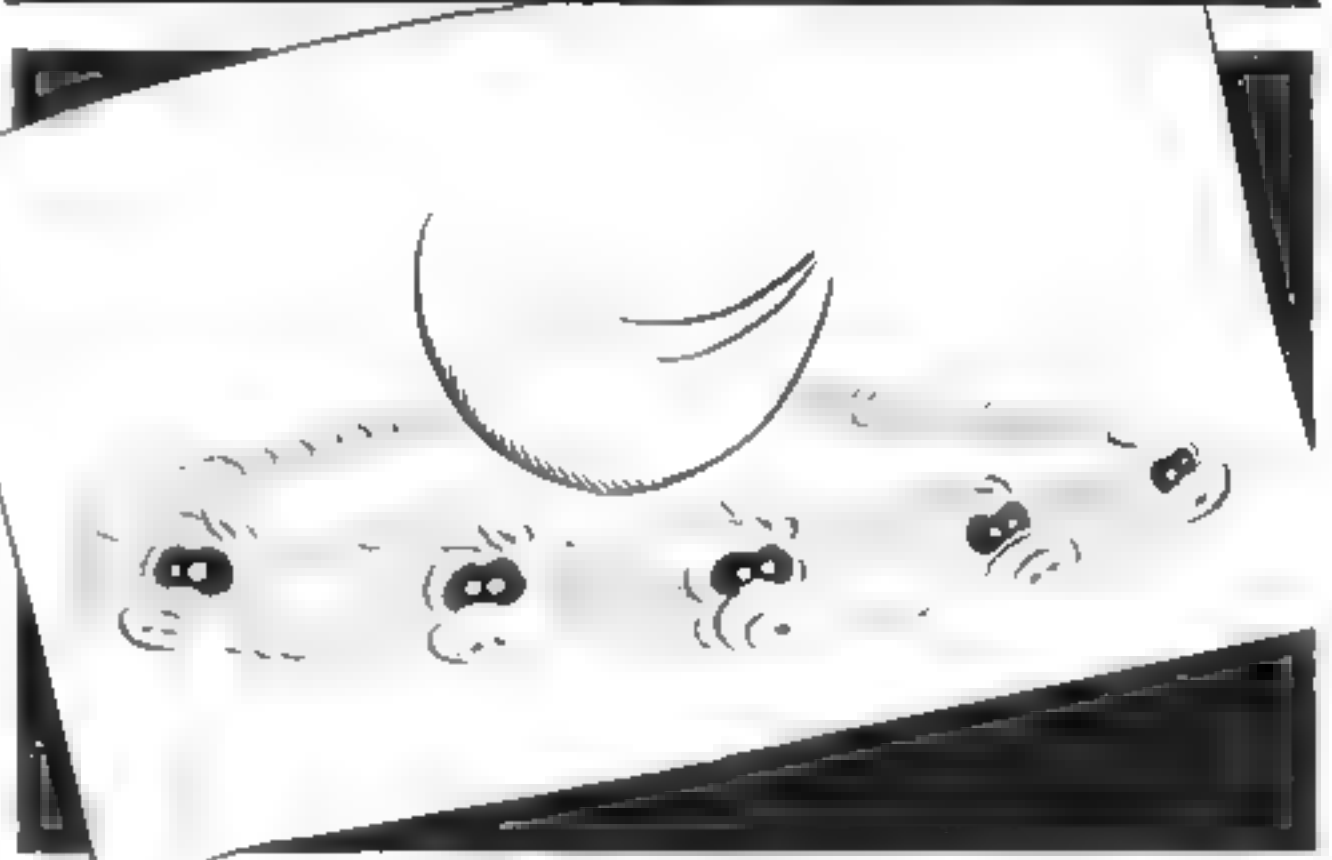


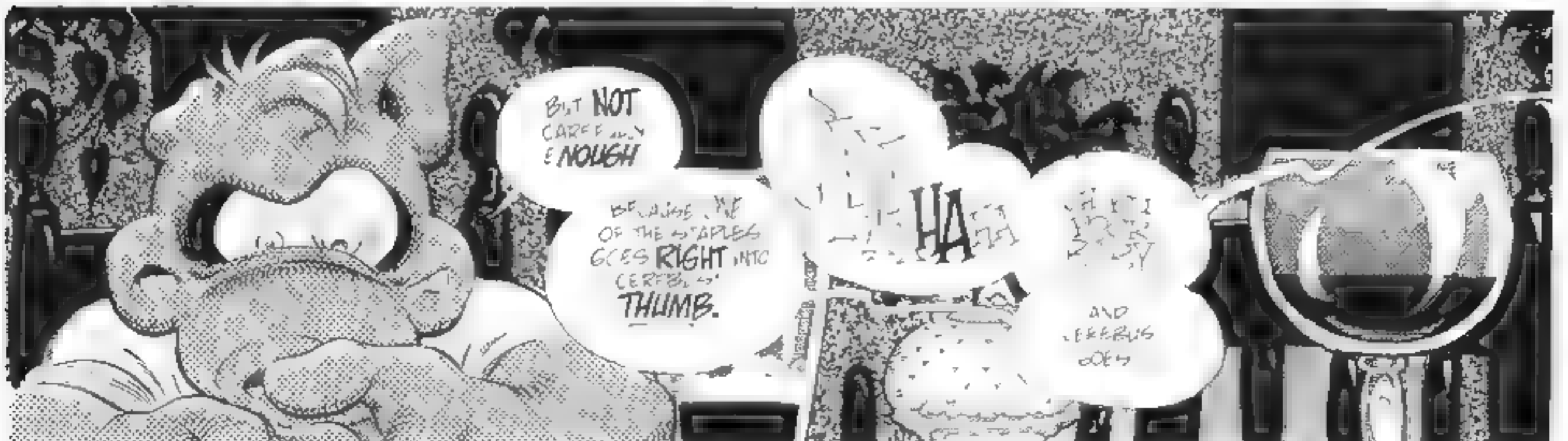


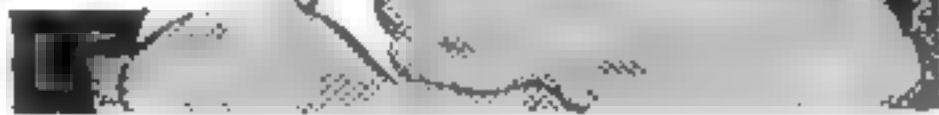












AND DAD HAD  
BEEN A... HOW  
THEY... ME

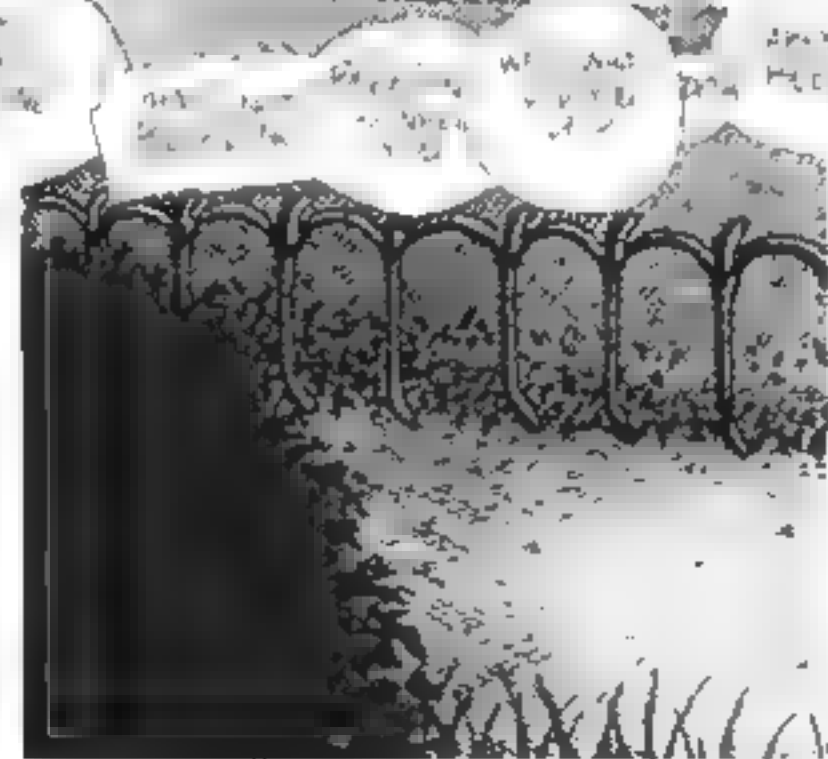
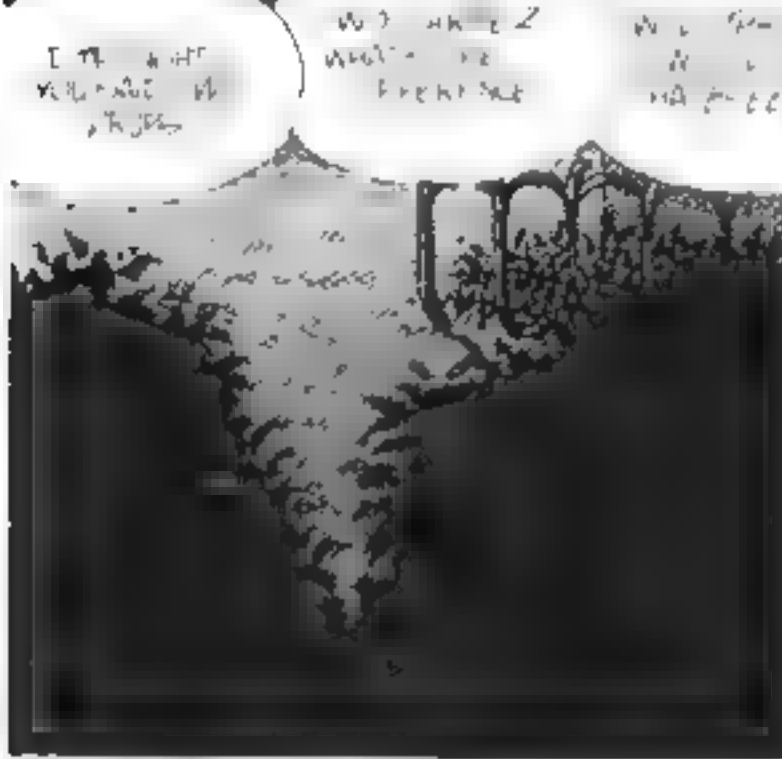
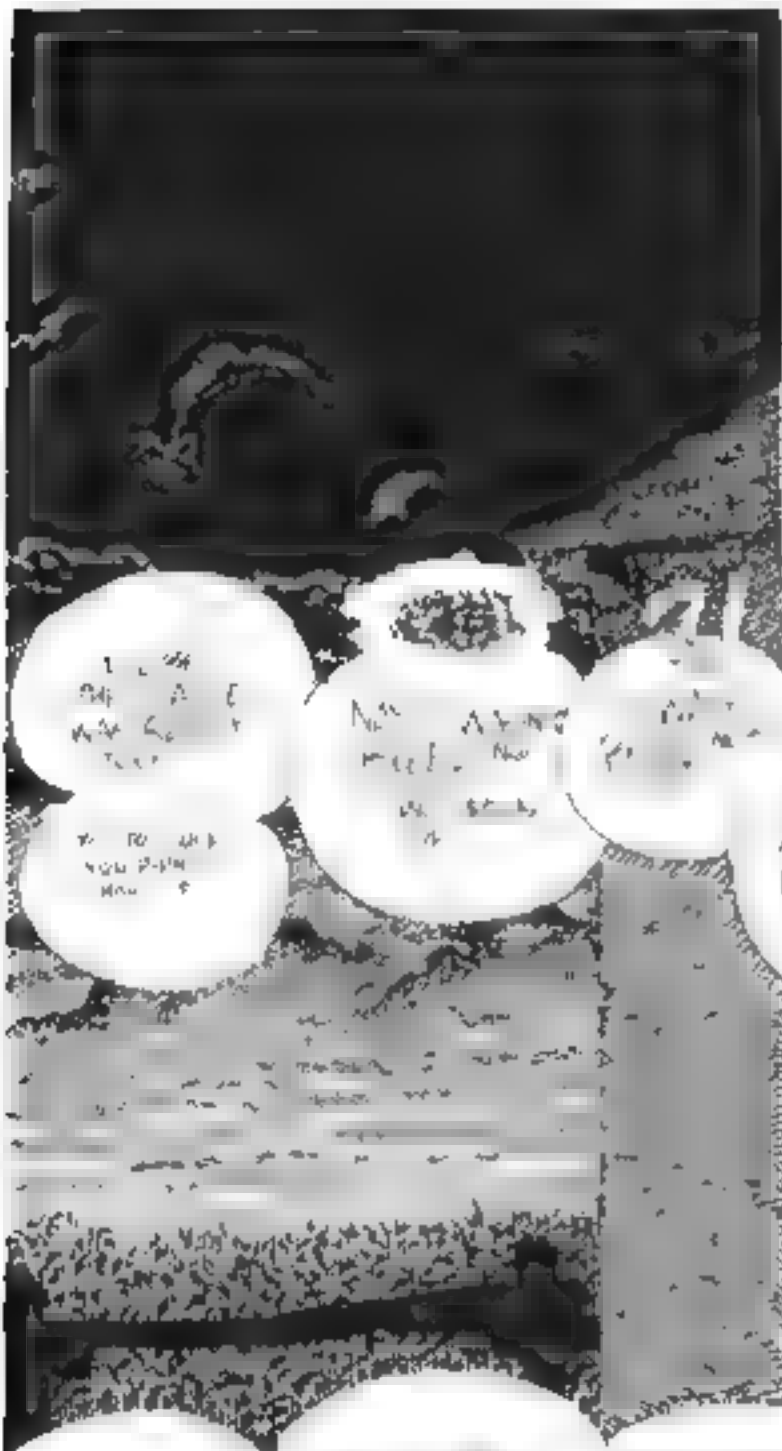
AND DAD HAD  
BEEN A... HOW  
THEY... ME

AND DAD  
HAD... ME

DAD SAYS  
"YOU... TRAIL  
... DIDN'T YOU"

AND  
DAD...  
... HAD...

AND...  
... AND TURNING BACK TO  
... WHEN A... H

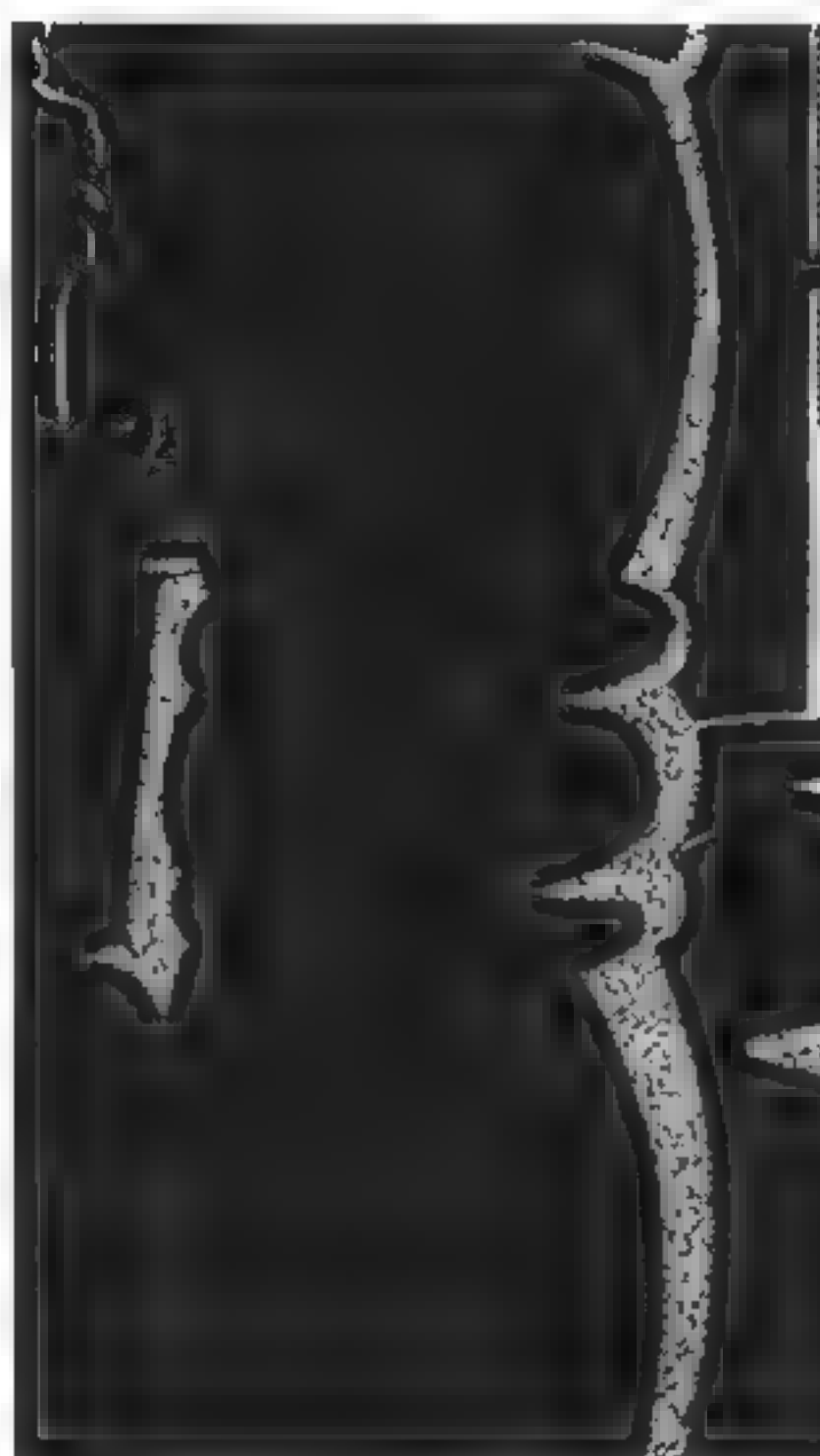
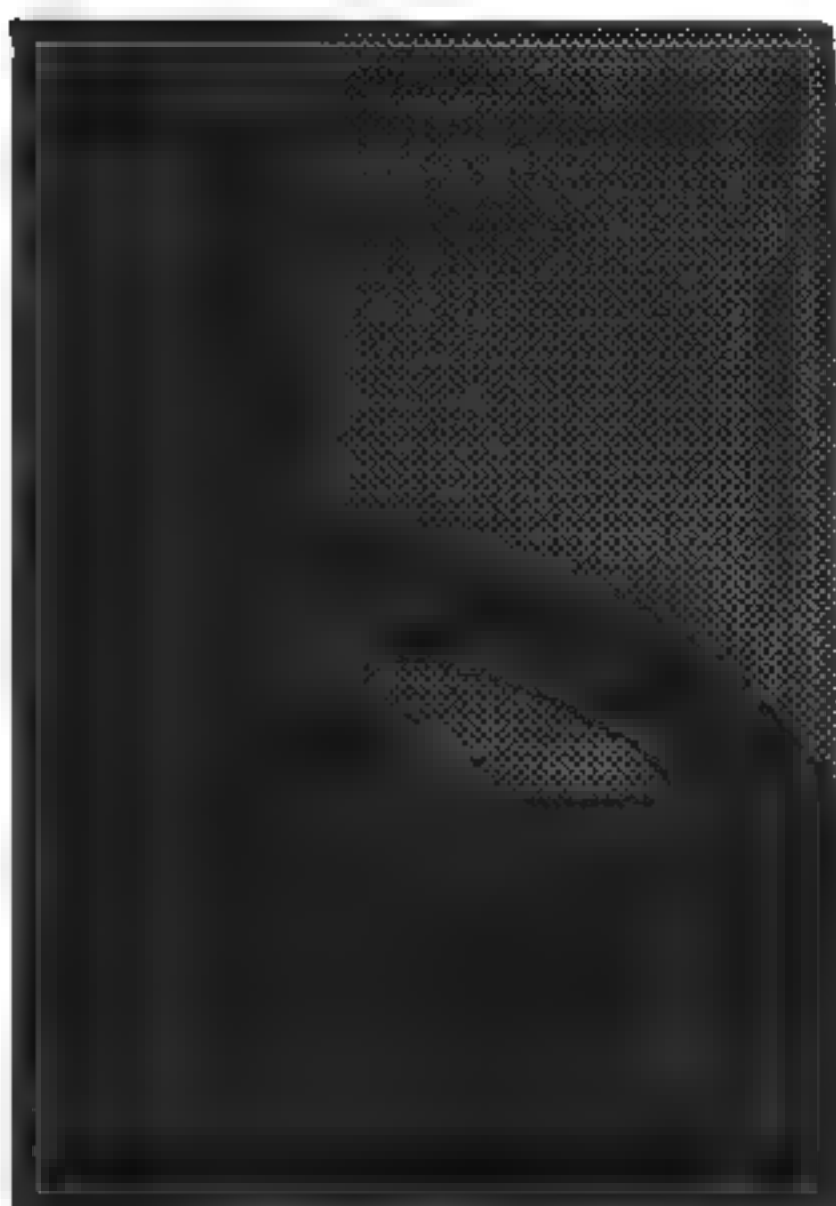


THAT'S ALL  
I WAS SAYING

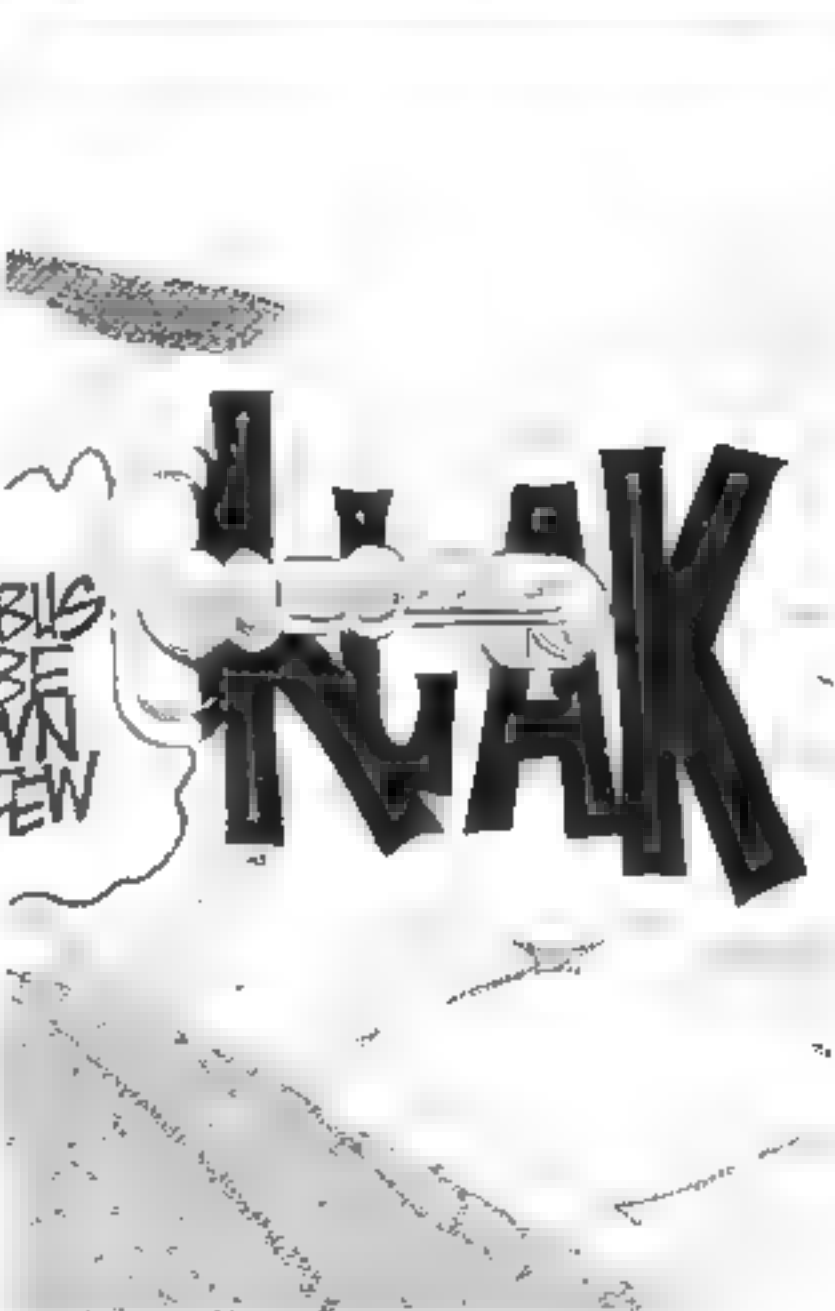
CEREBUS REALIZES  
THAT'S ALL YOU  
WERE

WHEN I  
WAS...  
... I WAS...

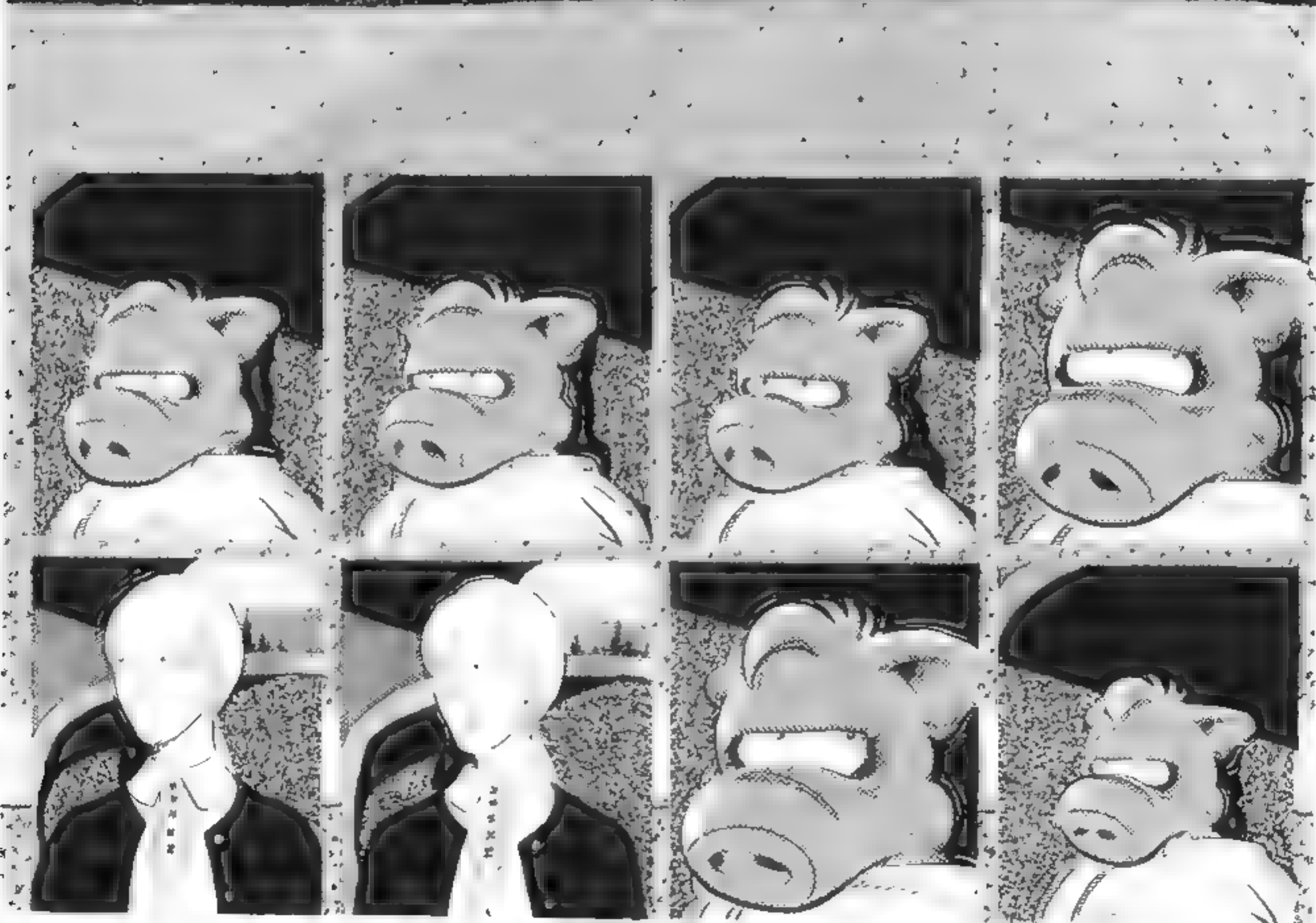
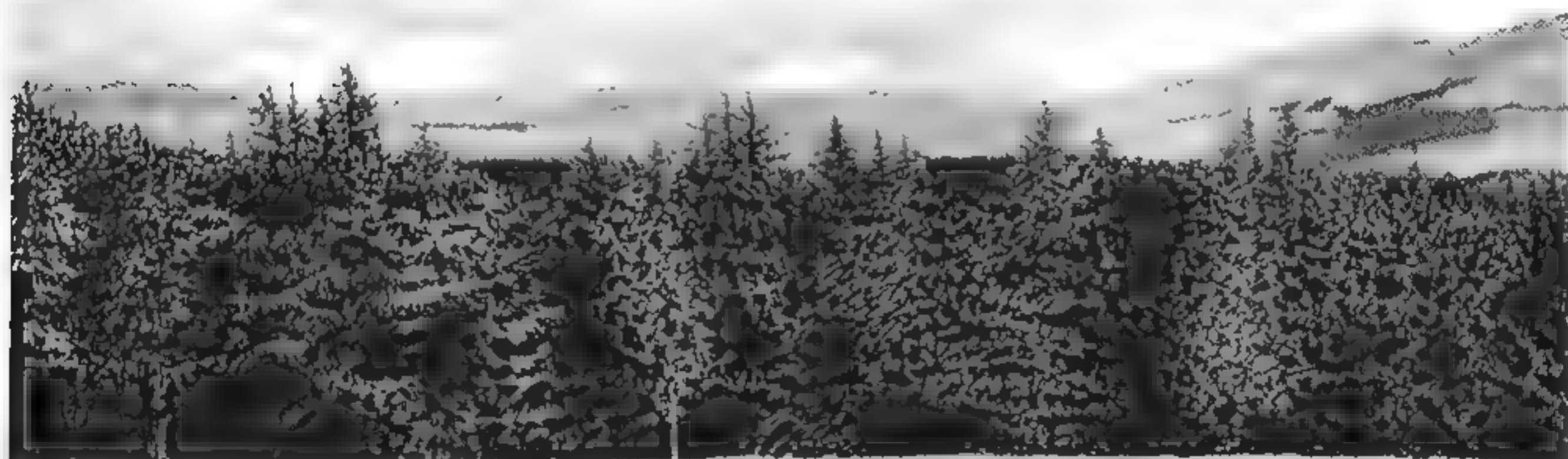
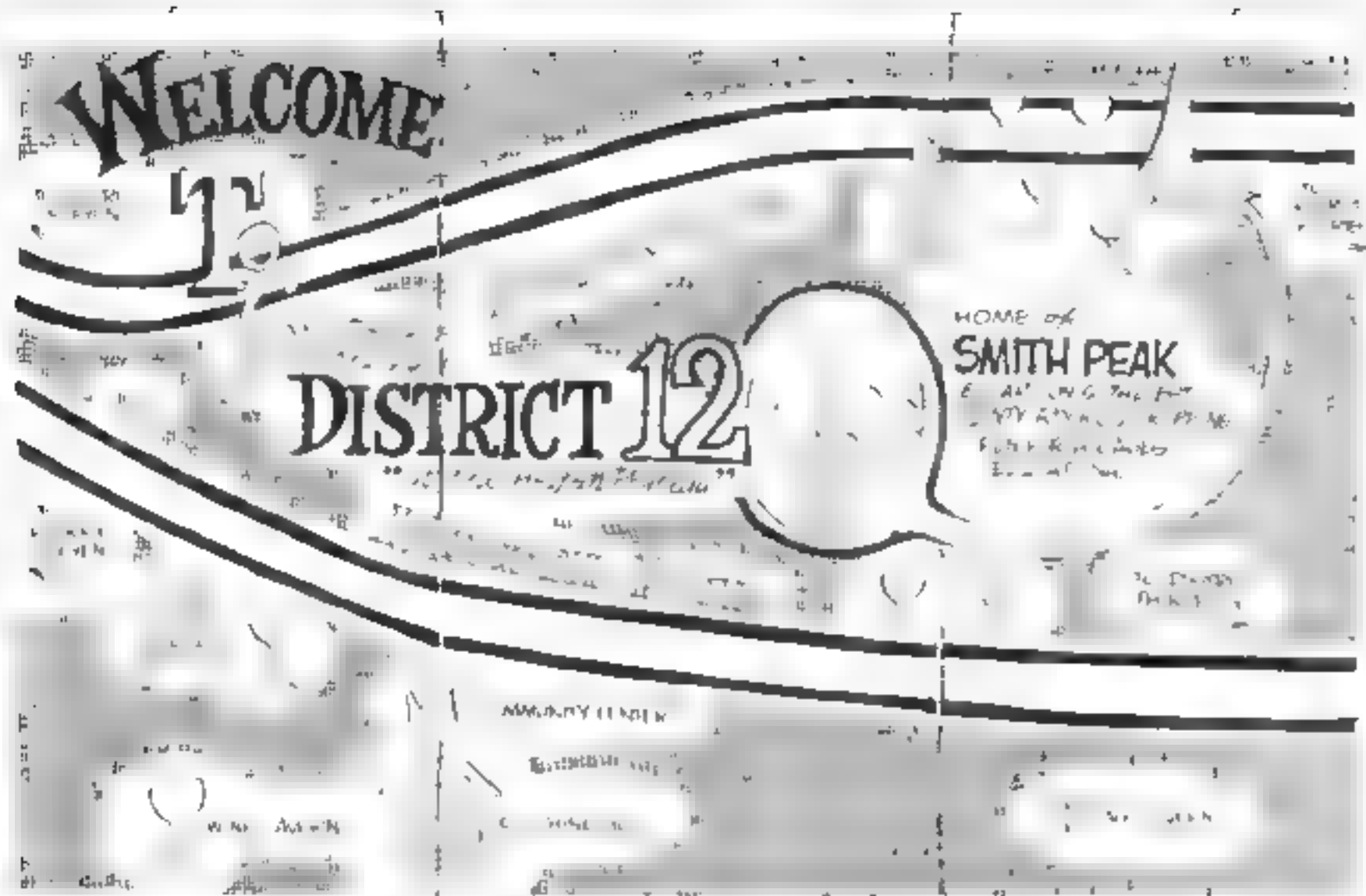


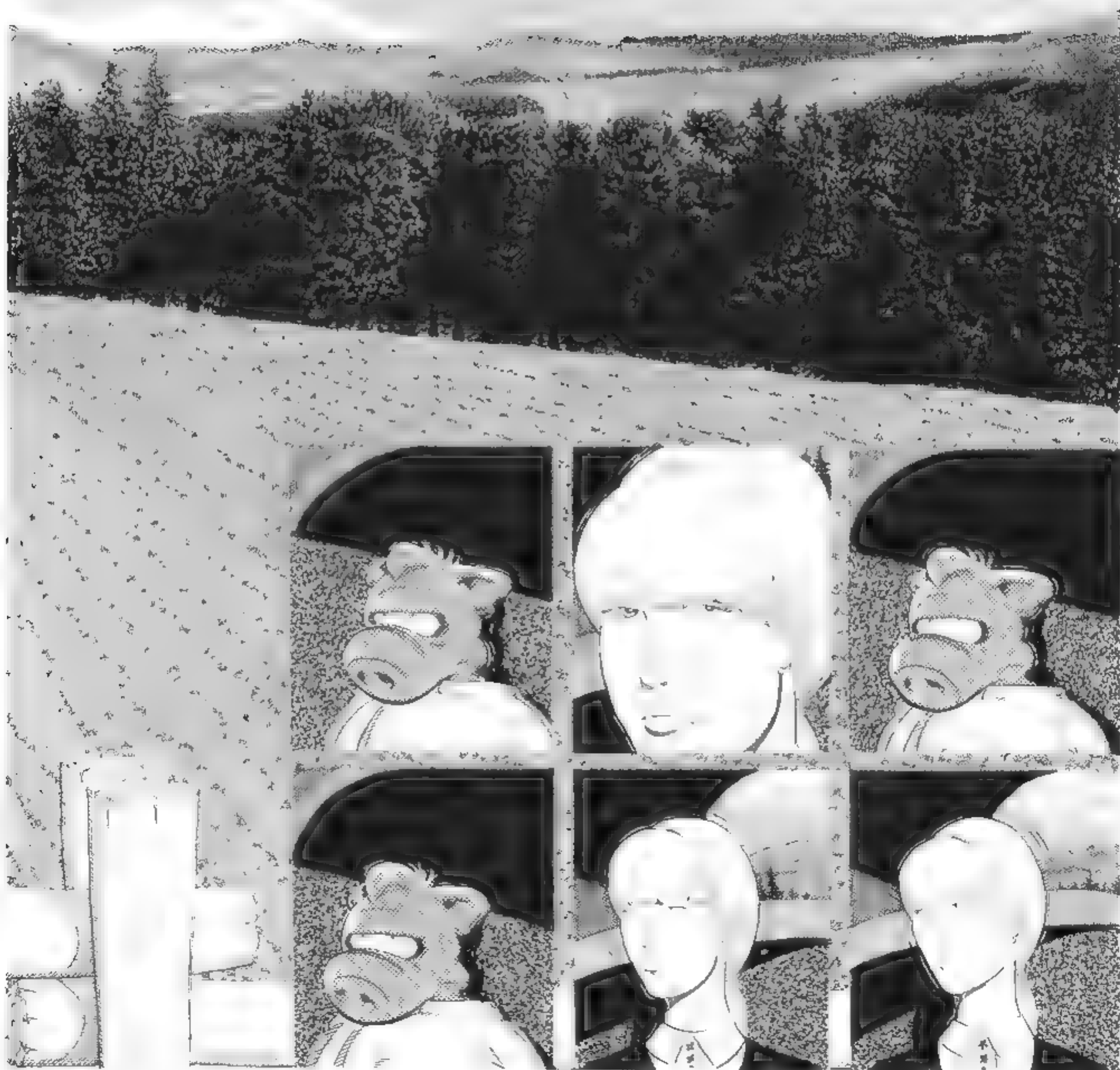












ARE YOU SURE  
CEREBUS DIDN'T  
TELL YOU THIS ONE  
ALREADY?

ROBTIE

SO

CEREBUS HAS THIS  
TIE BACK UP WITH KATES  
AND ALL THE WAY OVER  
TO HERE'S HOUSE  
CEREBUS IS HAVING  
A NICE YOU KNOW  
ONE OF THE GUYS FEELS

AND THE WHOLE  
TIME CEREBUS IS  
PRACTICING WHAT HE'S  
GOING TO SAY

CRUNCH  
CRUNCH

IF HER FATHER ANSWERS  
THE DOOR CEREBUS WILL  
SAY "GOOD MORNING MR  
HAYDEN, WOULD YOU GIVE  
THESE TO HER AND  
TELL HER THEY'RE  
FROM CEREBUS?  
THANK YOU"

CRUNCH  
CRUNCH

AND IF HER MOTHER  
ANSWERS THE DOOR CEREBUS  
WILL SAY "GOOD MORNING  
MRS HAYDEN, COULD YOU GIVE  
THESE TO CHERIE AND TELL  
HER THEY'RE FROM  
CEREBUS? THANK YOU!"

CRUNCH  
CRUNCH  
CRUNCH

AND IF HER SISTER  
ANSWERS THE DOOR CEREBUS  
WILL SAY, "GOOD MORNING,  
LYNN, COULD YOU GIVE THESE  
TO CHERIE AND TELL HER  
THEY'RE FROM CEREBUS?  
THANK YOU!"

AND IF HER OTHER  
SISTER ANSWERS THE  
DOOR CEREBUS WILL SAY  
"GOOD MORNING, BONNIE,  
COULD YOU GIVE THESE TO  
CHERIE AND TELL HER  
THEY'RE FROM CEREBUS?  
THANK YOU!"

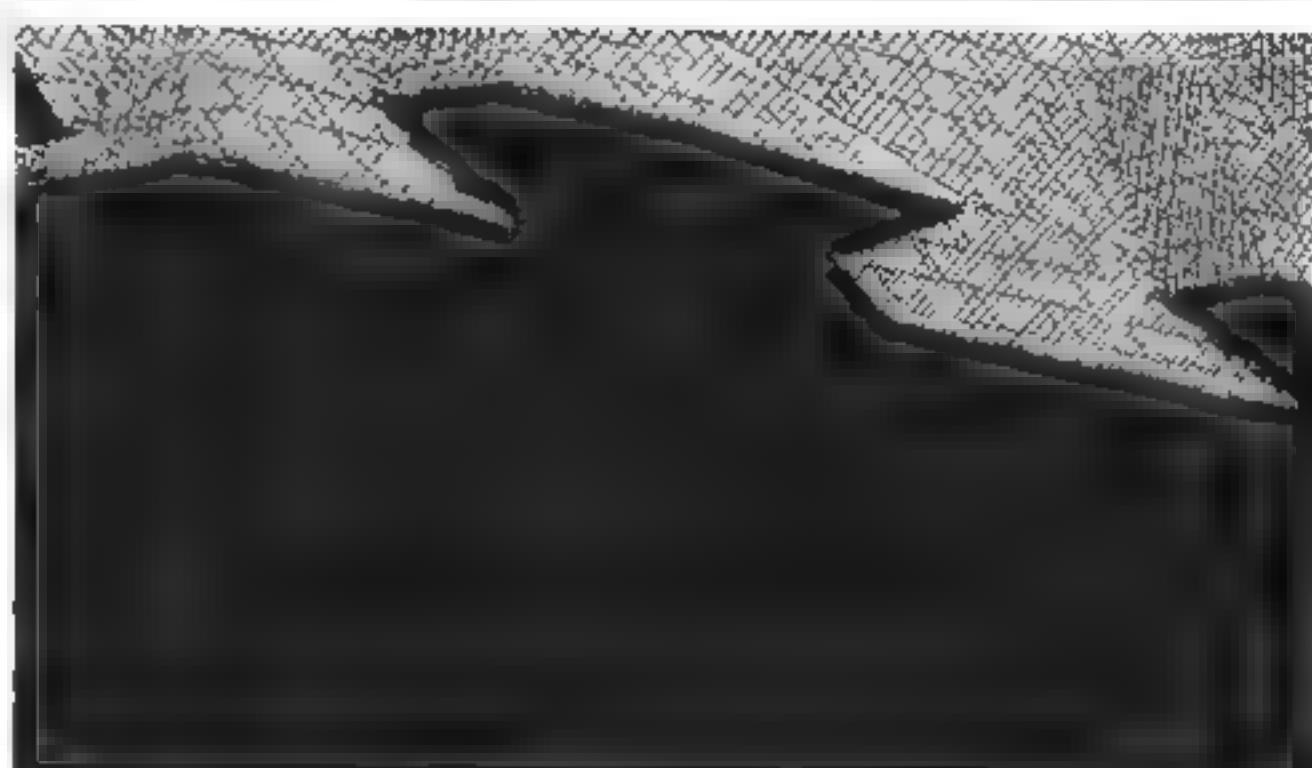
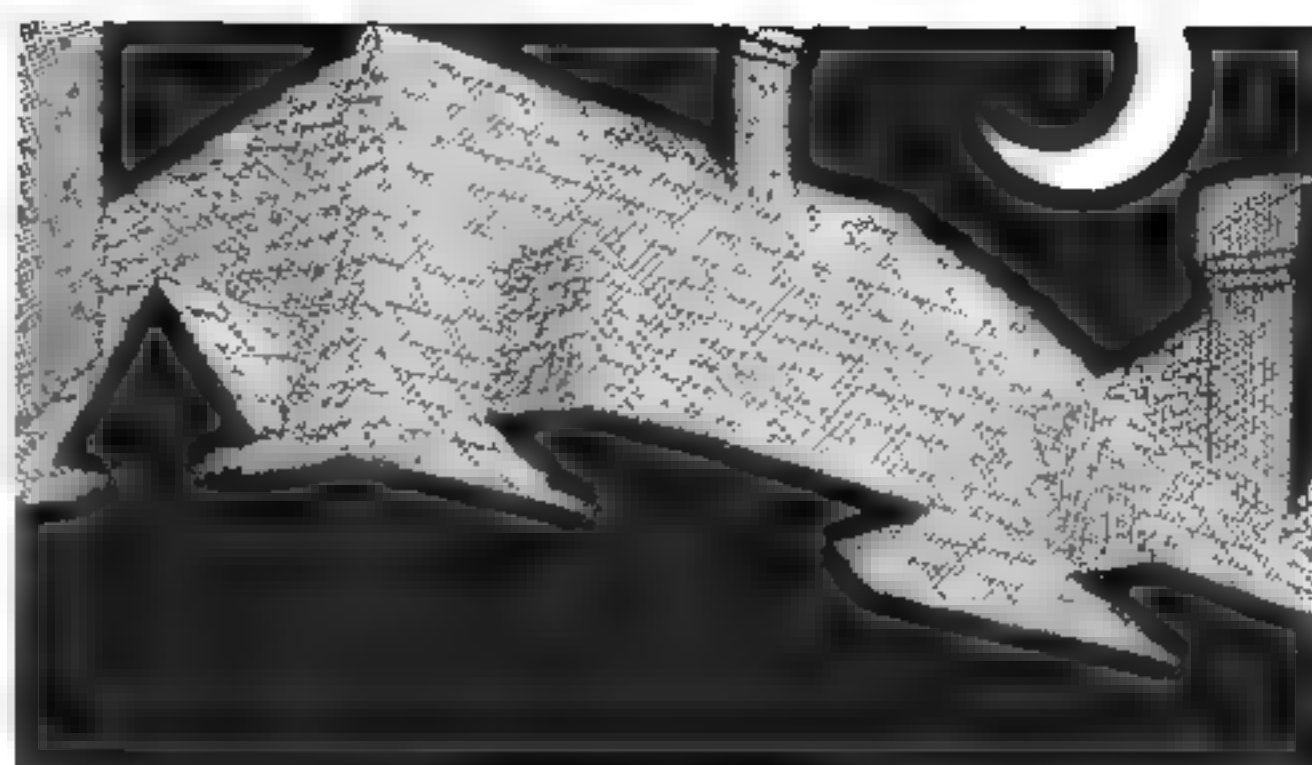
THAT'S SO  
TIE

SO WHAT  
HAPPENED?

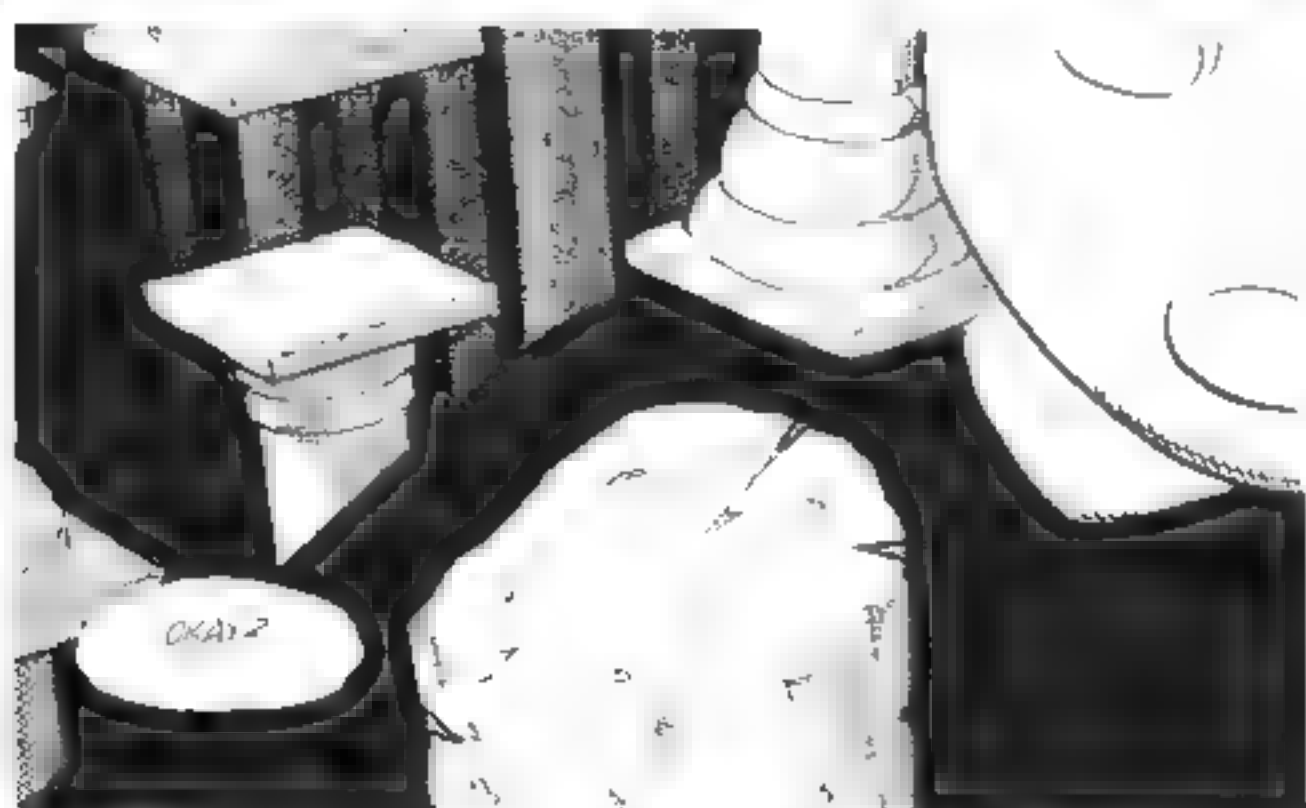
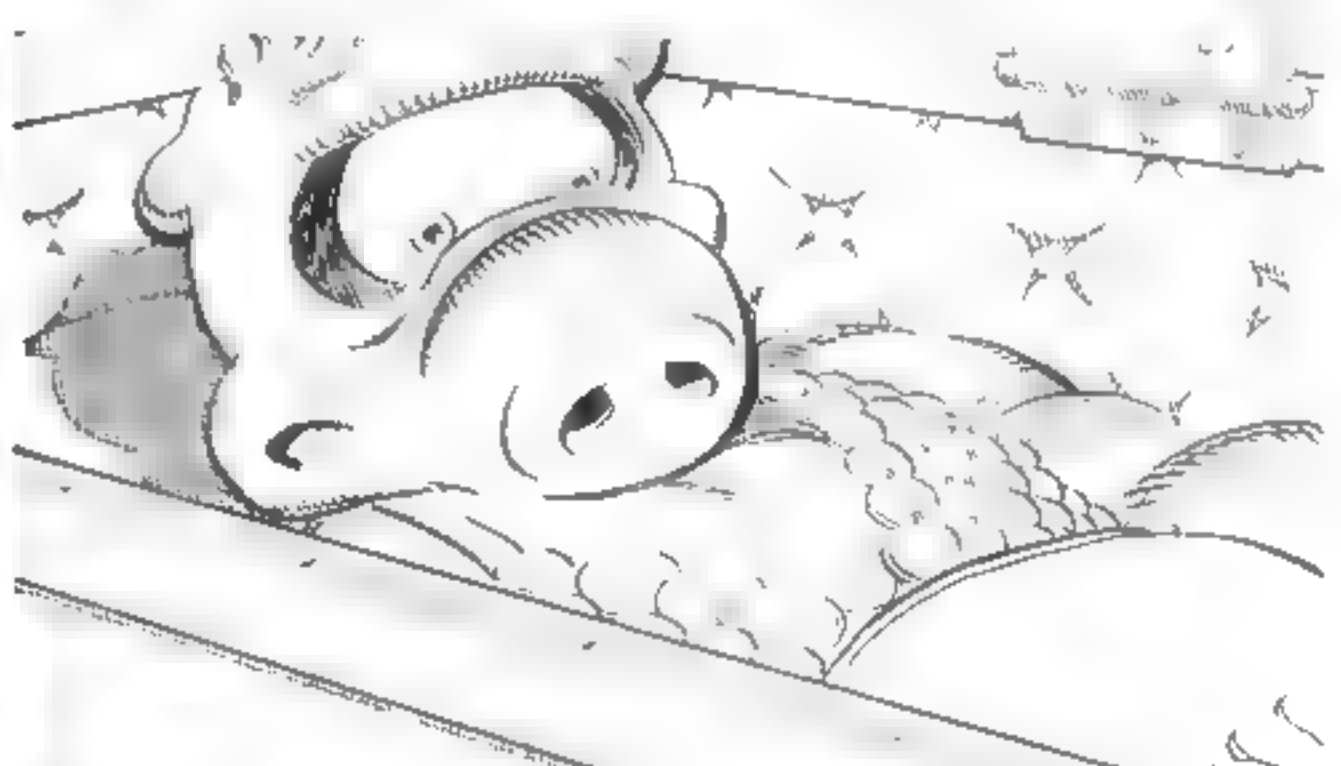
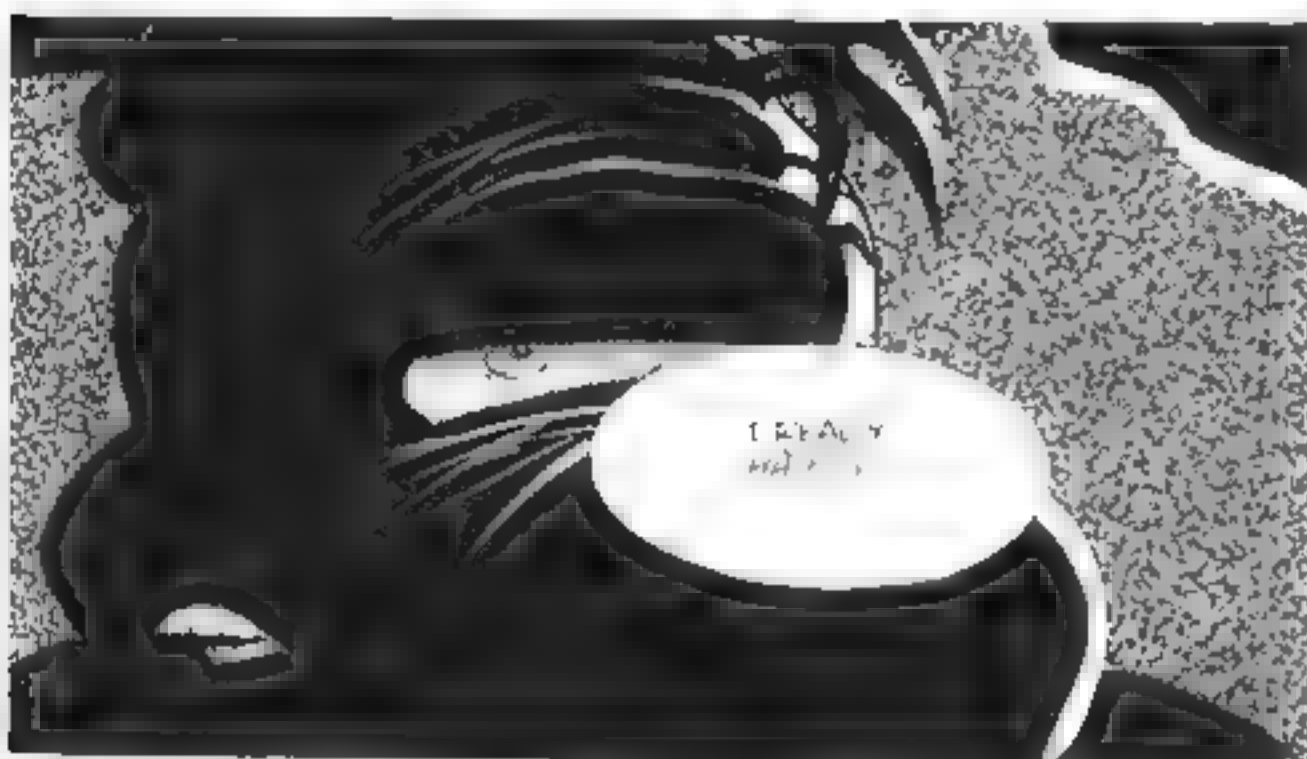
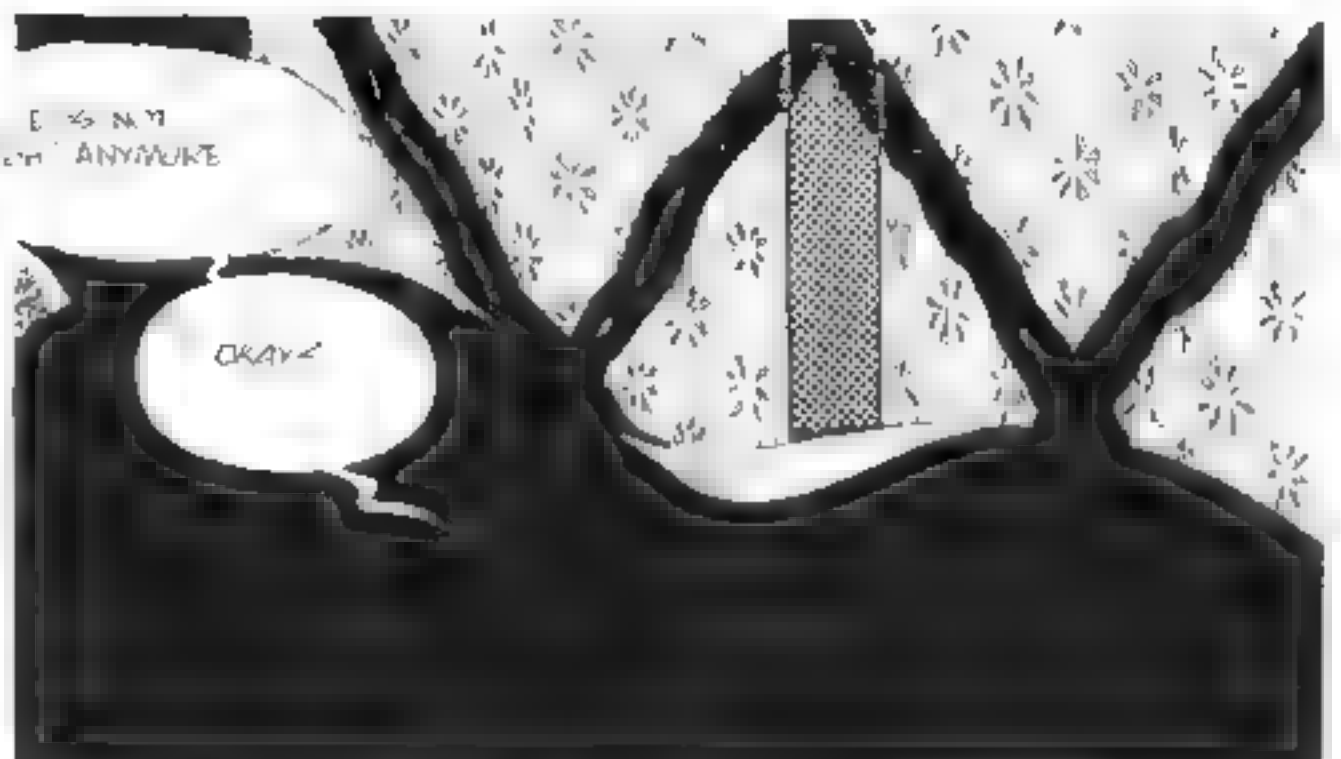


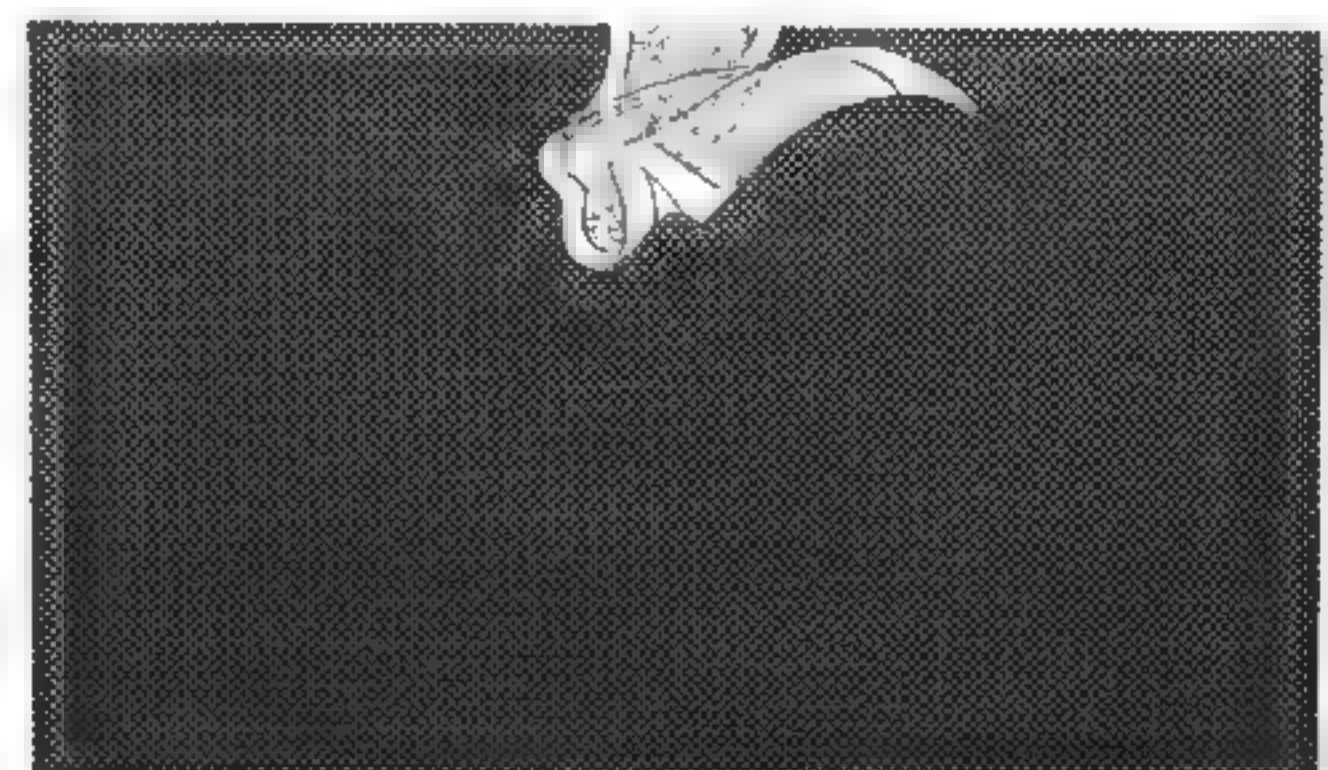
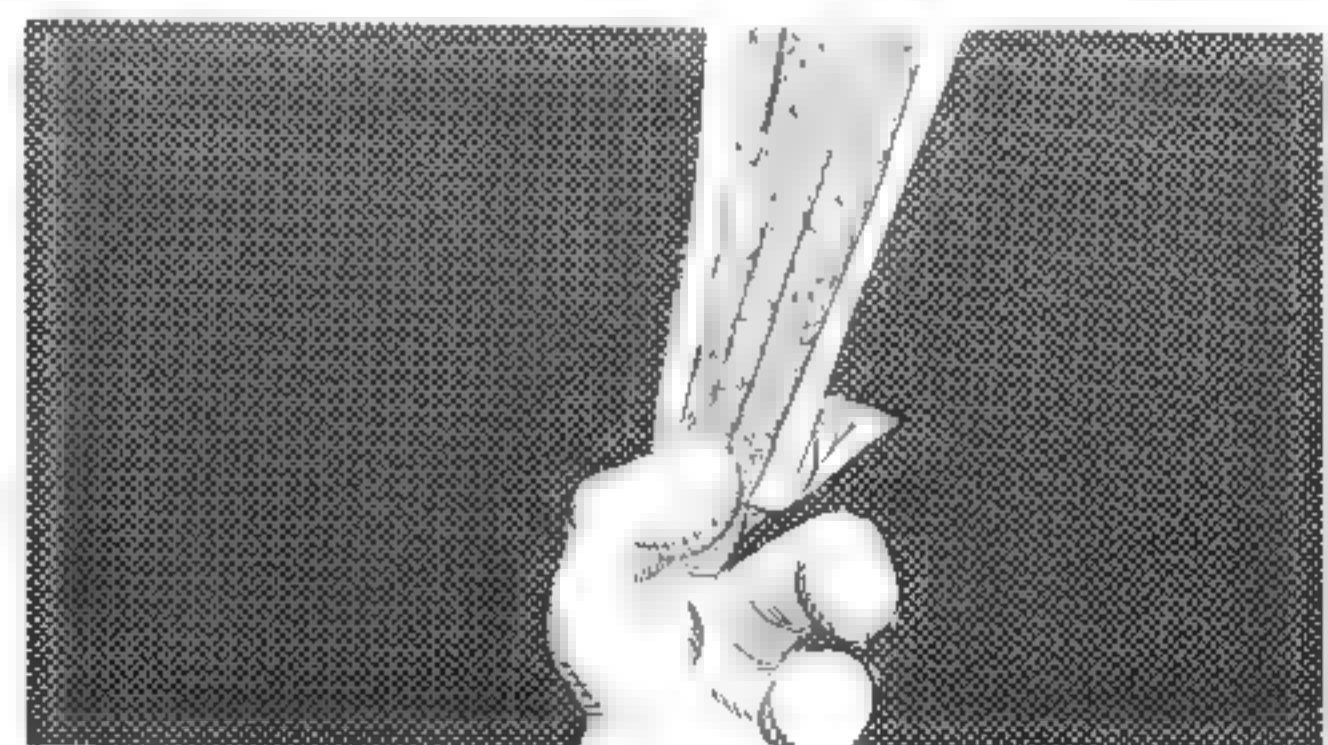
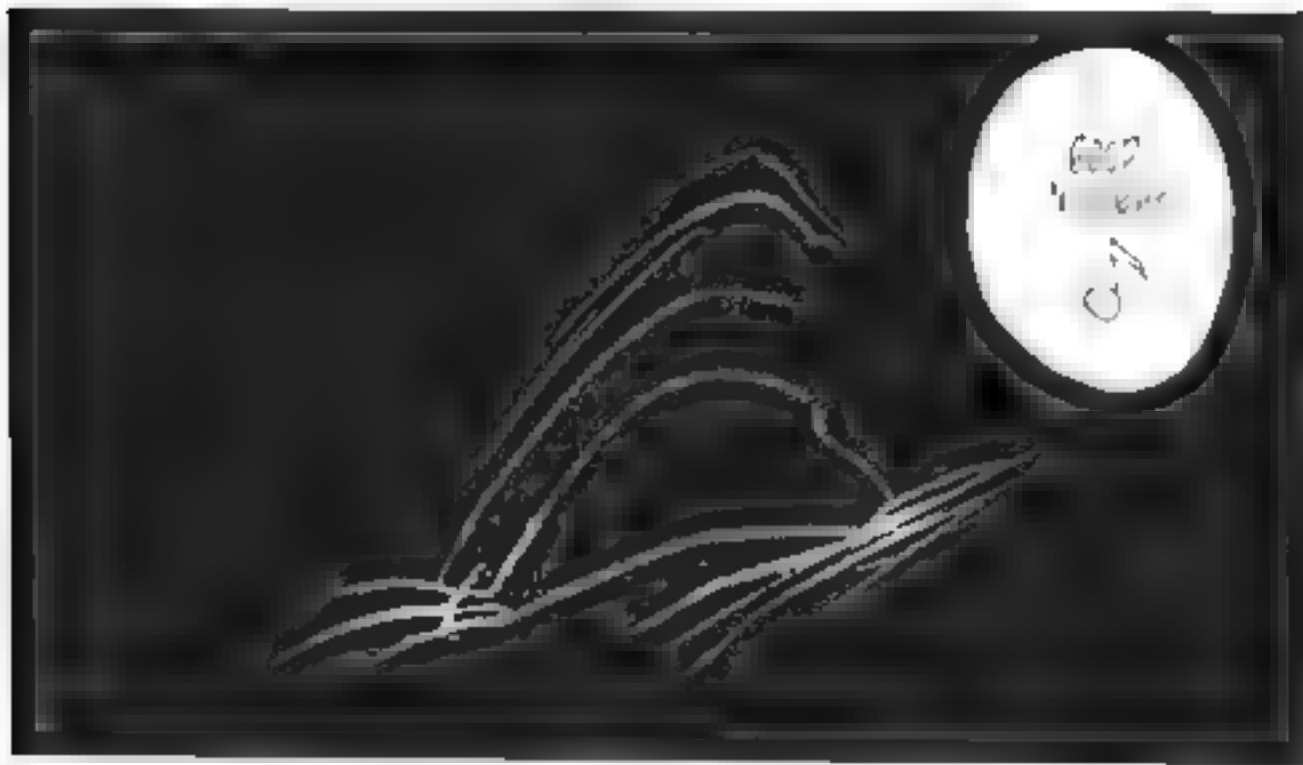
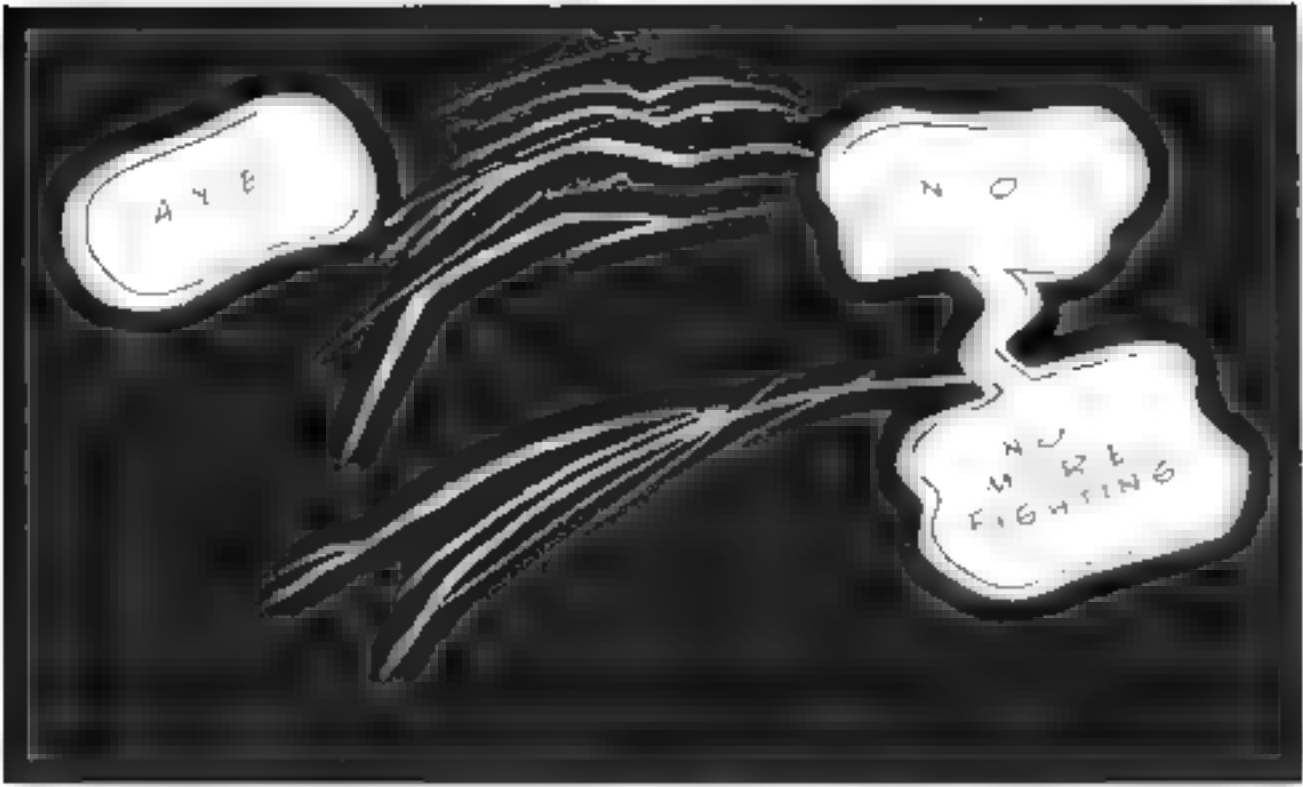




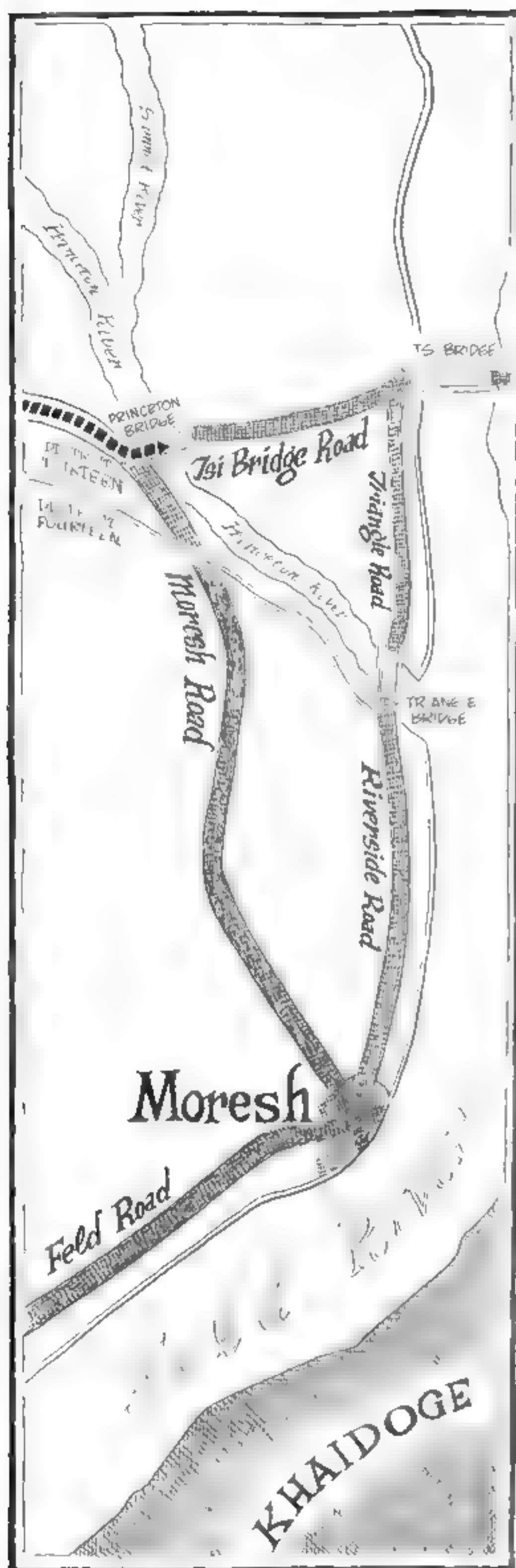






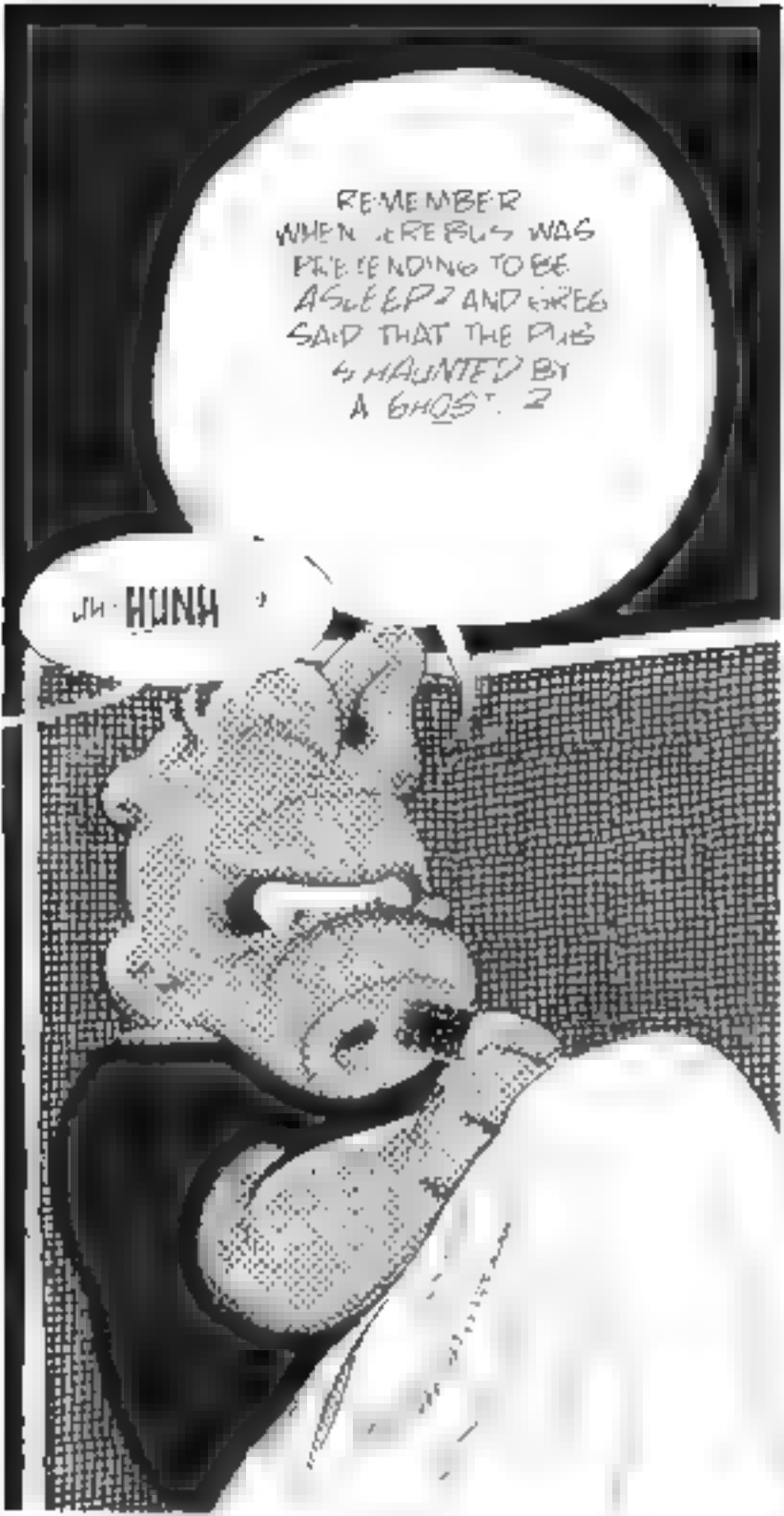


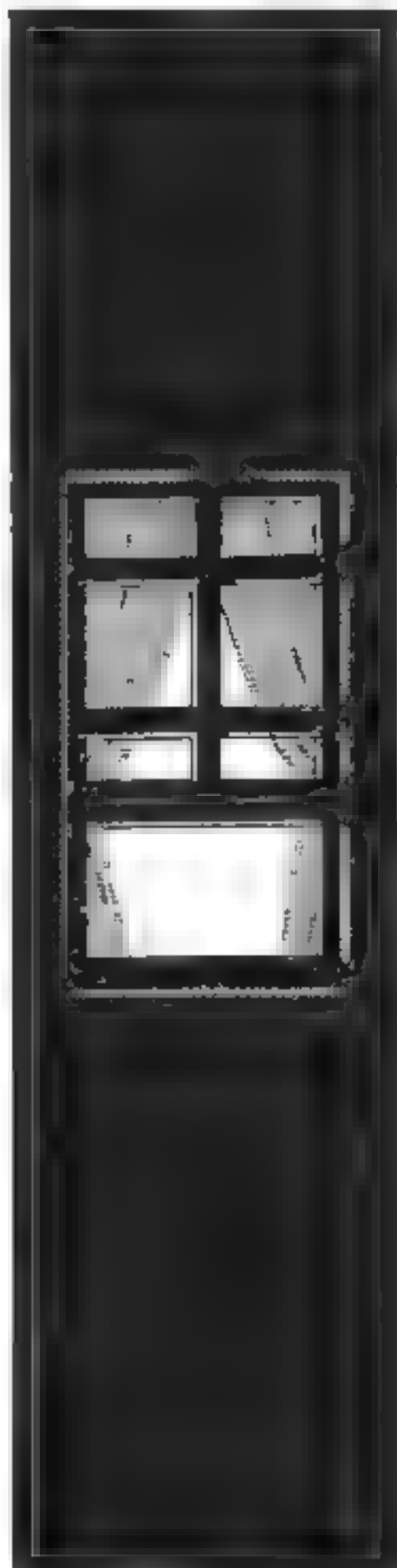
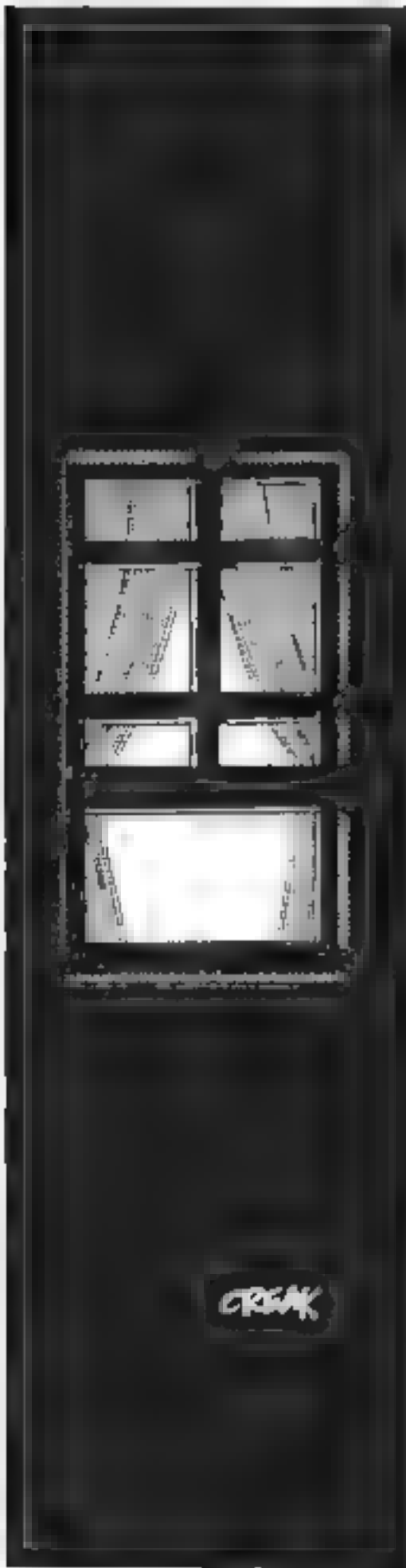






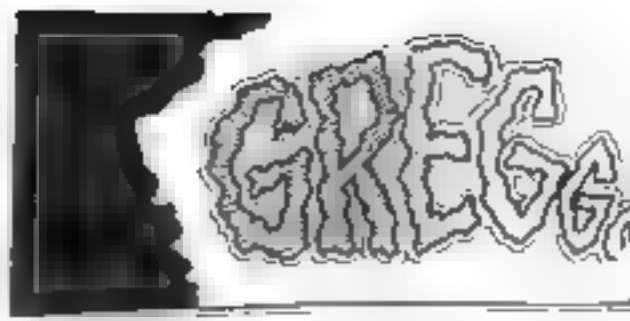
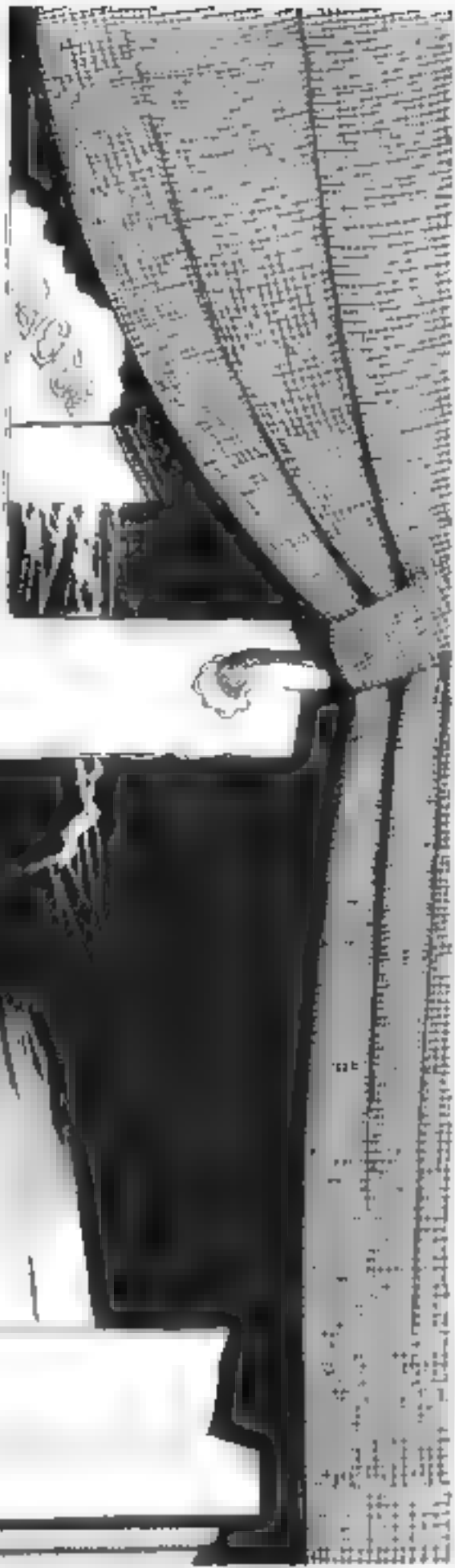
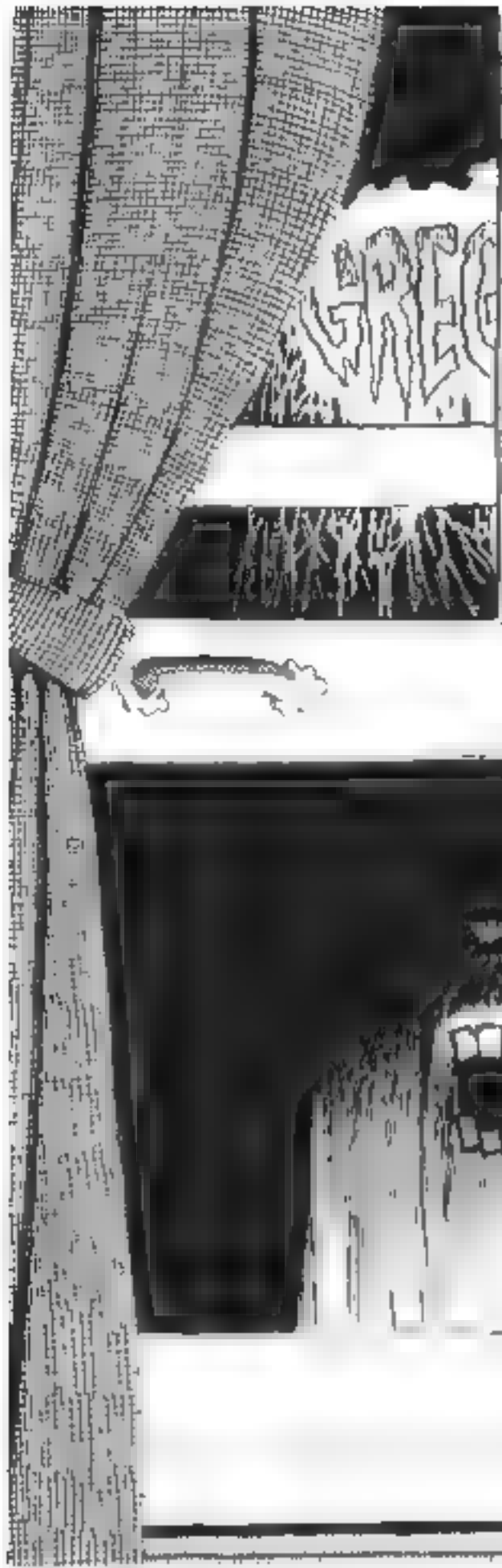


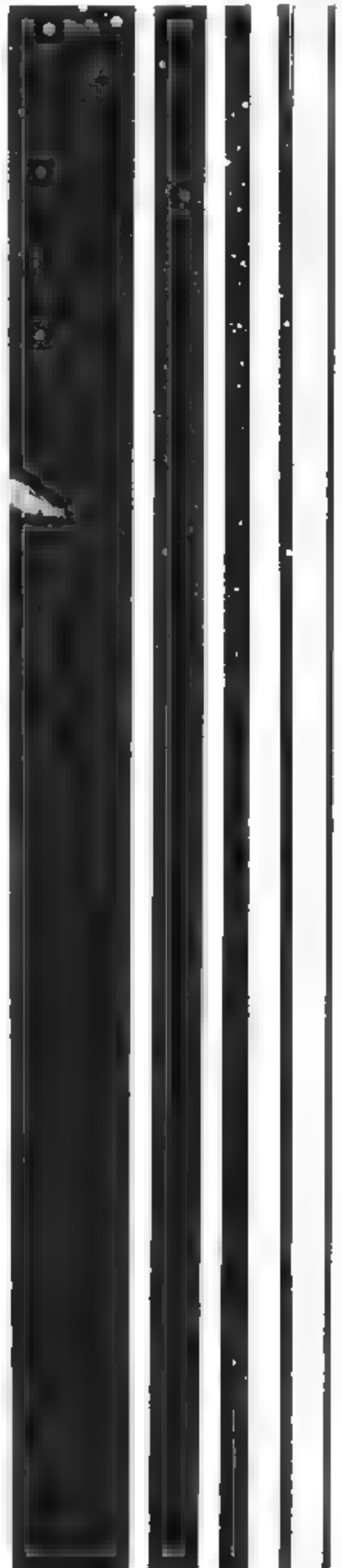






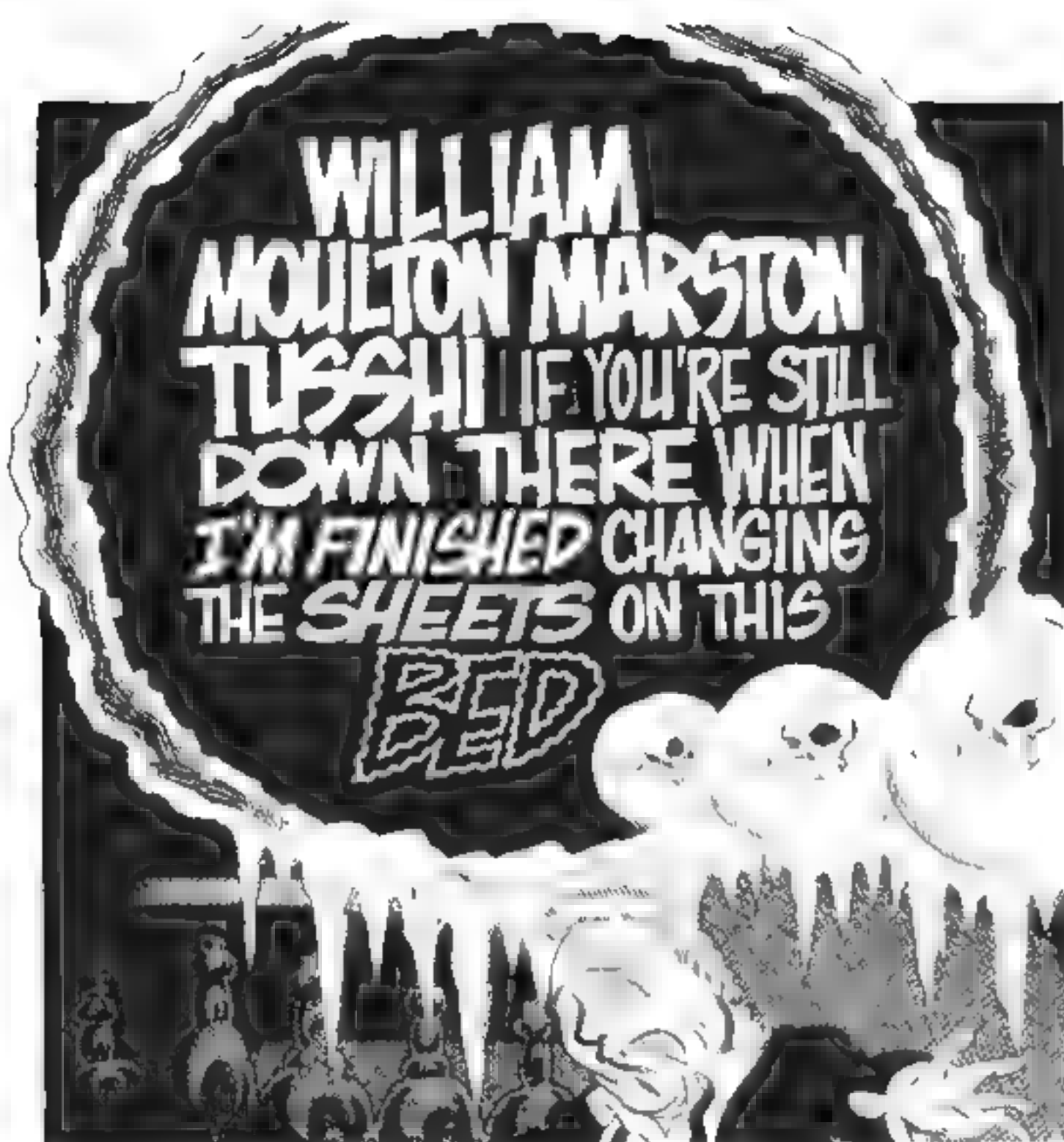










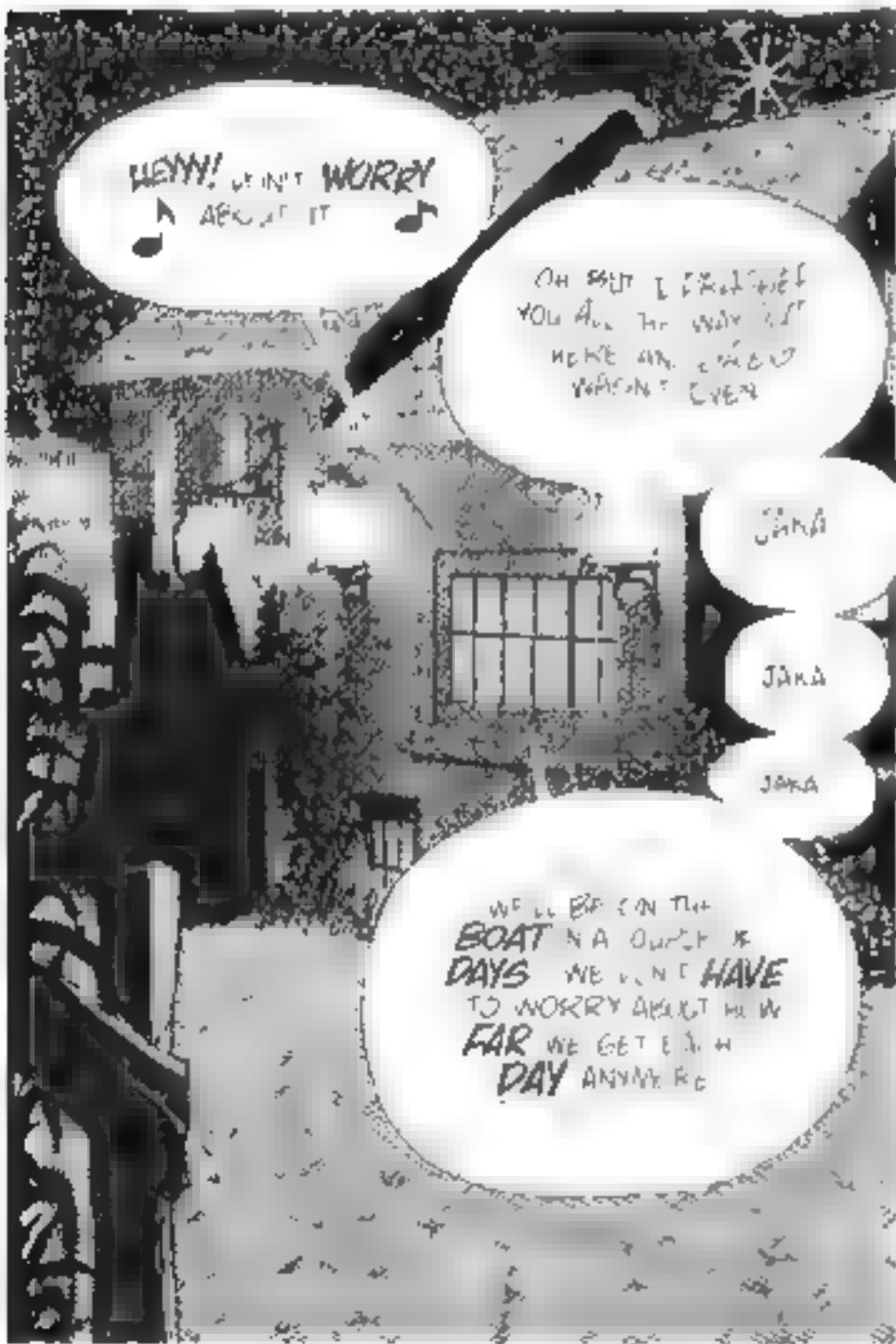




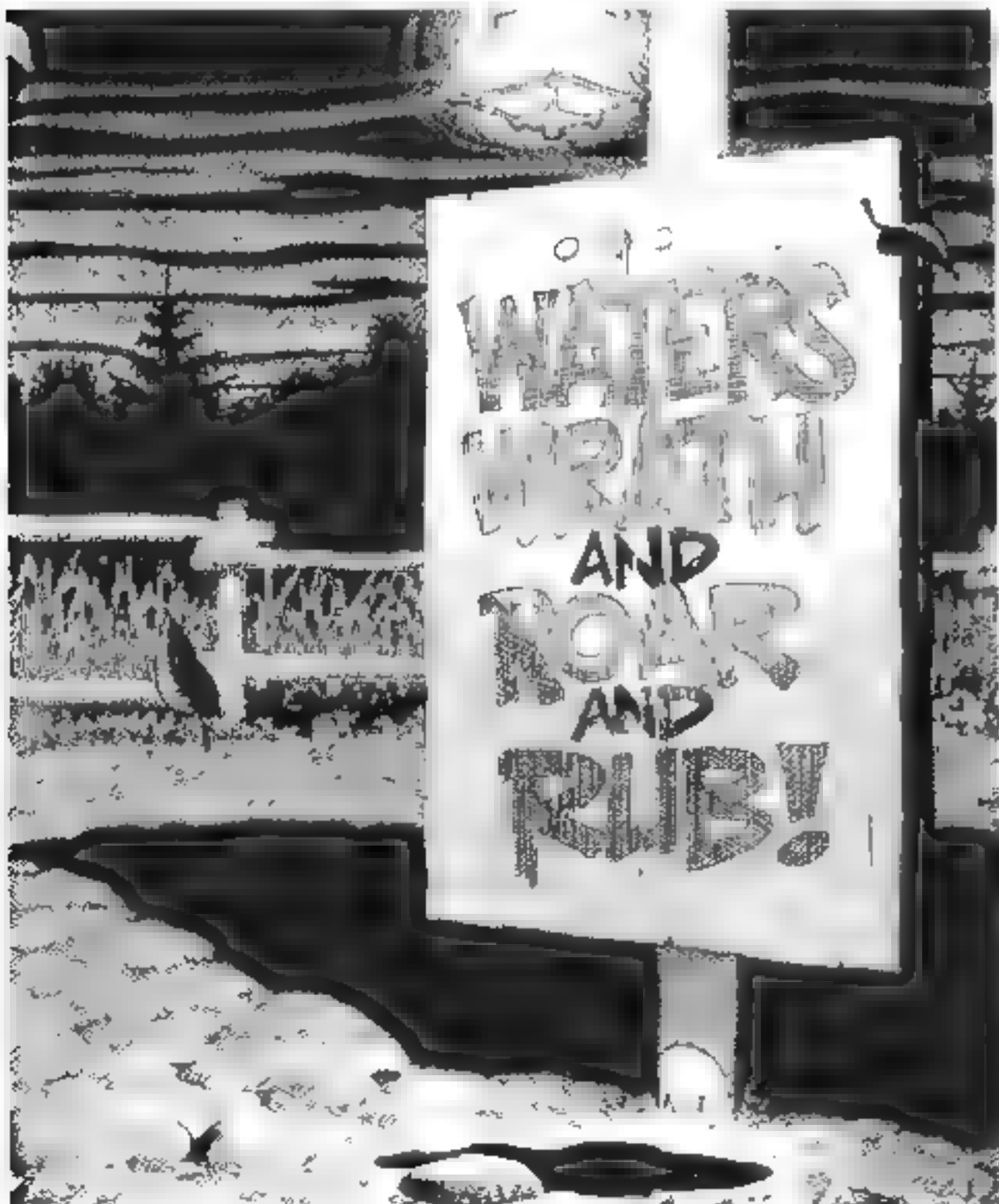
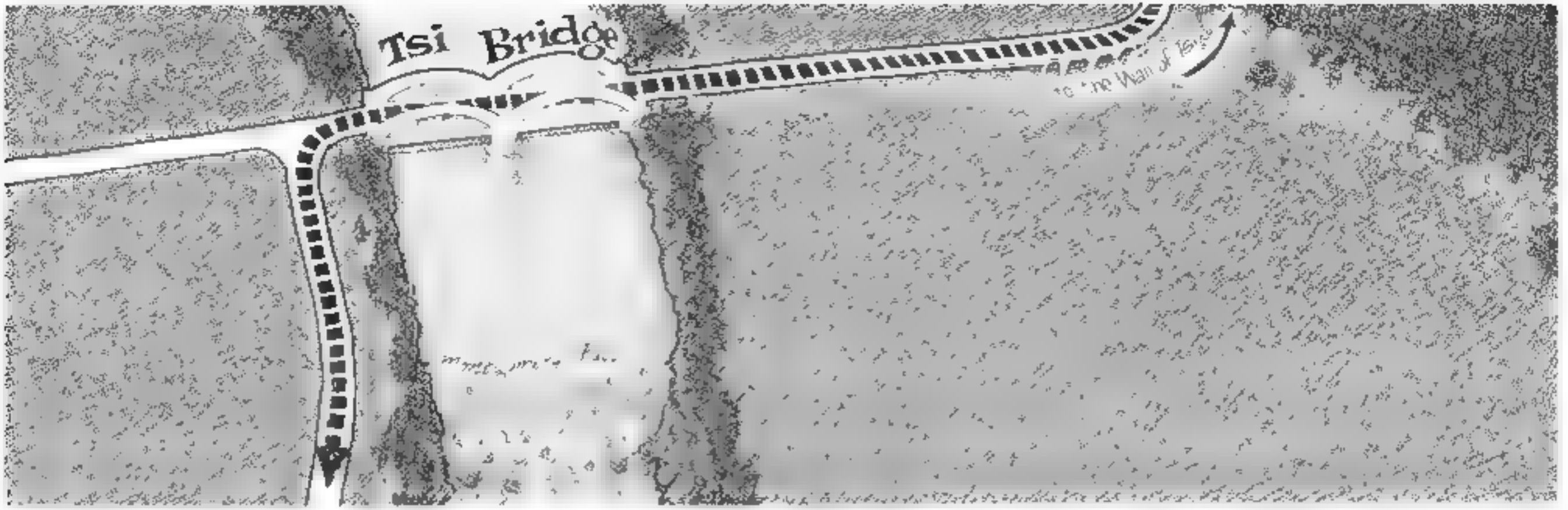


















It seems to me the only gentlemanly thing to do.

Of course there ARE some critical questions involved:

ONE: as the bride just fallen over? (as it wuh)

If so... is 'er fall perhaps attributable to the bride's choice of impractical bridal footwear?

RIGHT  
RIGHT  
RIGHT



If that is, INDEED the case, then I should think it Wise—in a reversal of the Cinderella Archetype—to endeavour to REMOVE 'er metaphorical bridal footwear Prior to raiseen 'er up.

(In the interests of minimizing the risk of some recurrent bridal tumble or oothuh)

RIGHT  
RIGHT  
RIGHT



TWO: was she pushed?  
If such is our thesis, it be'oves us, I think, to make a determination as to the Size and Disposition of 'er alleged assailant

That is, if 'er alleged assailant is of Considerable Proportions and, shall we say, of a Surly Disposition—we must exercise the greatest caution in endeavouring to raise 'er up, if the preponderance of likelihoods indecate that All we shall accomplish by our efforts is to get the bride Pushed Down again—and ourselves as well (into the bargain...)

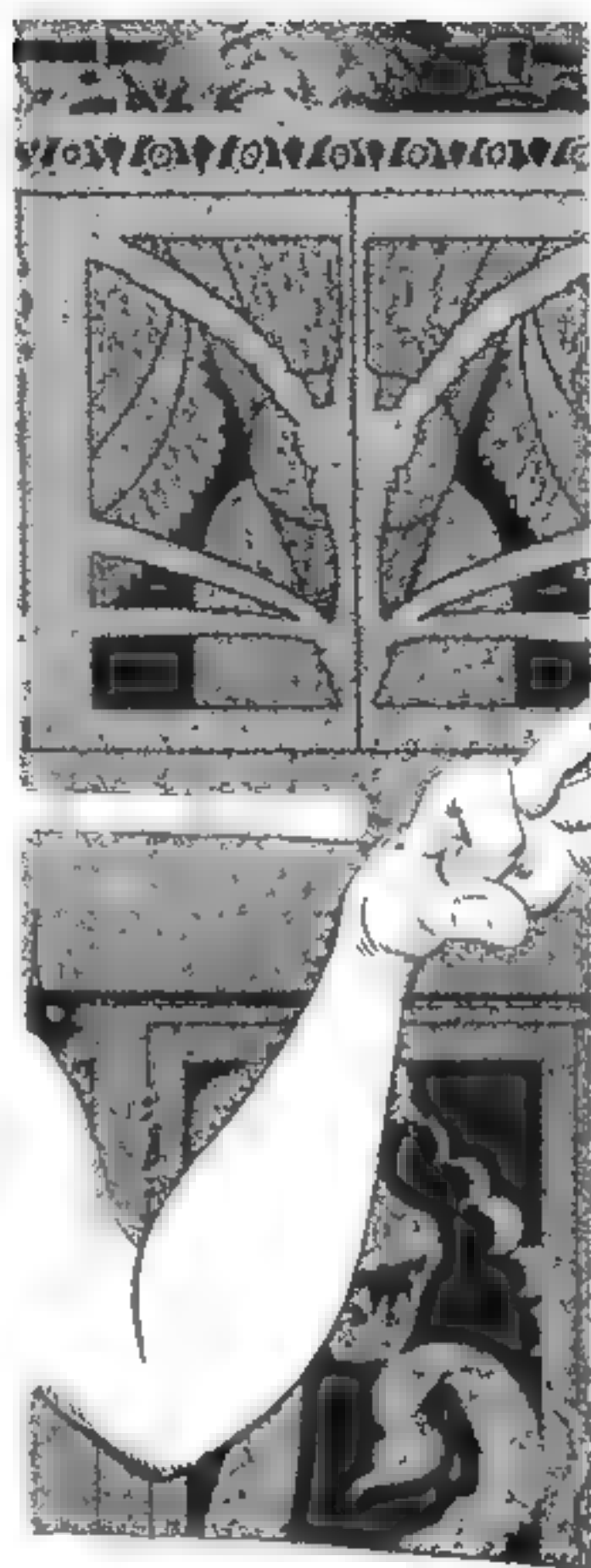
RIGHT  
RIGHT  
RIGHT



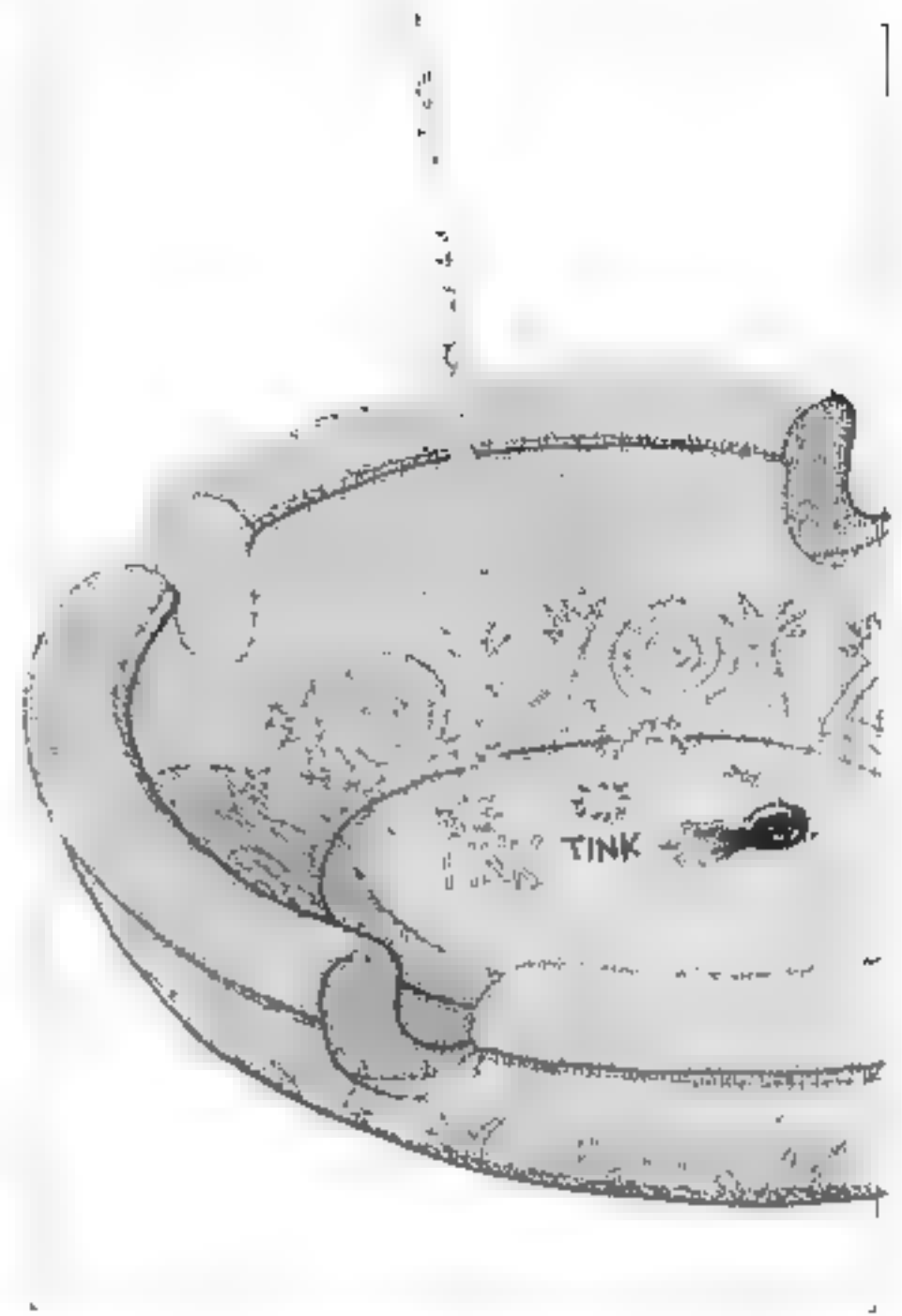
A corollary of that (it would seem to me) is the size and the disposition of the bride 'erself; which powwez question THREE: Is the bride of sooch...matronly...proportions that it will prove necessary to seize upon those areas of 'er anatomy which I would characterize as "unchivalrous 'andfuls" in order to effect the "raising up" p'owcess? That is to say: IF the bride IS as virtuous as we inexplicably presuppose 'er to be (again, that being the only gentlemanly 'given' we will allow ourselves under the circumstances) that brings us to question FOUR: What is the viability of what I'd characterize as the 'chivalrous 'andfuls'? To wit: are 'er wrists and forearms sufficiently sturdy to serve as viable fulcrums for the raising up of 'er bridal bulk in toto--? WithOUT introducing the danger of FOUR (a): wrenching 'er bridal arms out of their bridal sockets or FOUR (b): causing all participating gentlemanly parties assisting in the "raising up" p'owcess to p'loonge 'eadlong into the bridal pitfall at soom critical 'ponkchuh should the gentlemanly parties in question prove humerically insufficient to overcome the bridal eementia which obtains.



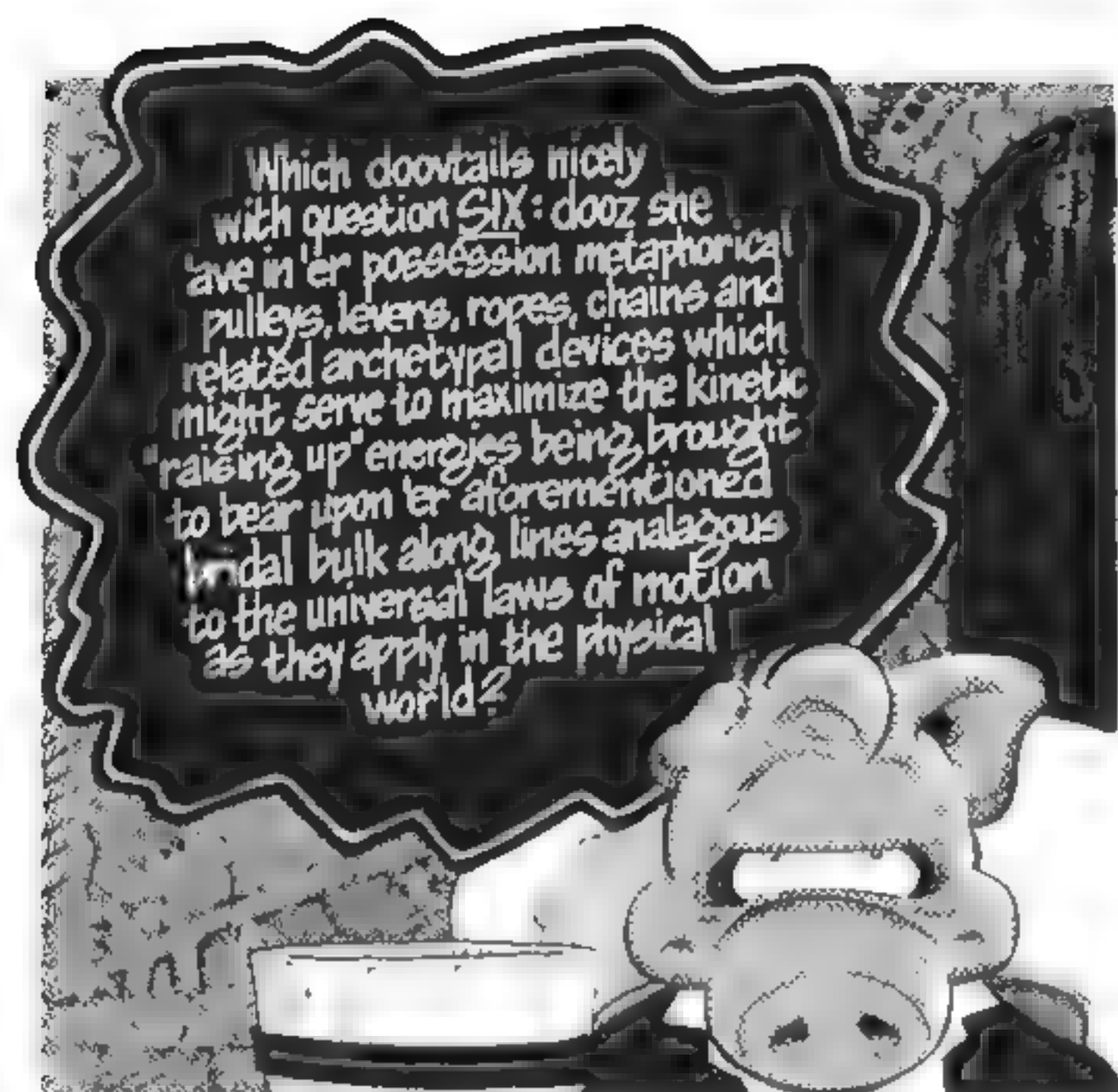
**RIGHT RIGHT RIGHT!**  
WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS  
THAT THE "BRIDE" IS PART  
OF OUR BRAINS: AN ARCHETYPE  
HOUSED IN THE LARGELY  
INACCESSIBLE MYTHOPOETIC  
RESEVOIRS OF OUR  
INSTINCTUAL PROTO-MINDS!



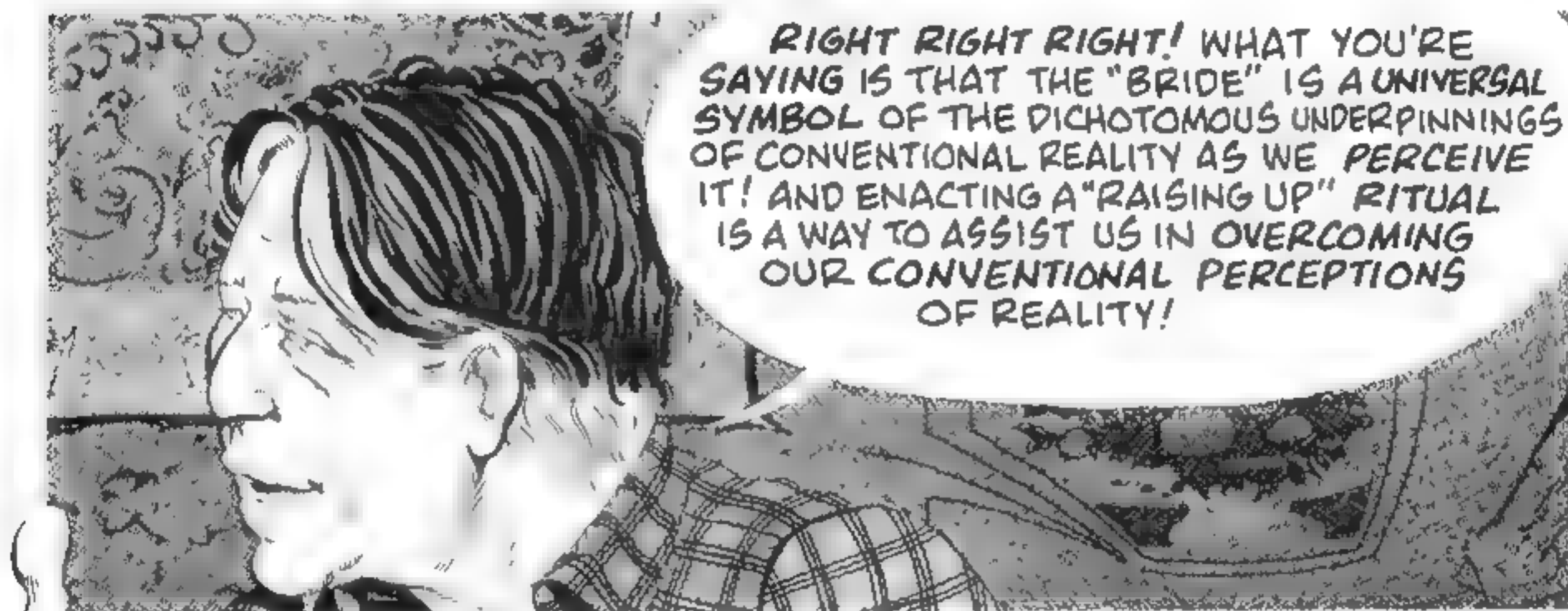








Which doovtails nicely  
with question SIX: dooz she  
'ave in 'er possession metaphorical  
pulleys, levers, ropes, chains and  
related archetypal devices which  
might serve to maximize the kinetic  
"raising up" energies being brought  
to bear upon 'er aforementioned  
bridal bulk along lines analagous  
to the universal laws of motion  
as they apply in the physical  
world?

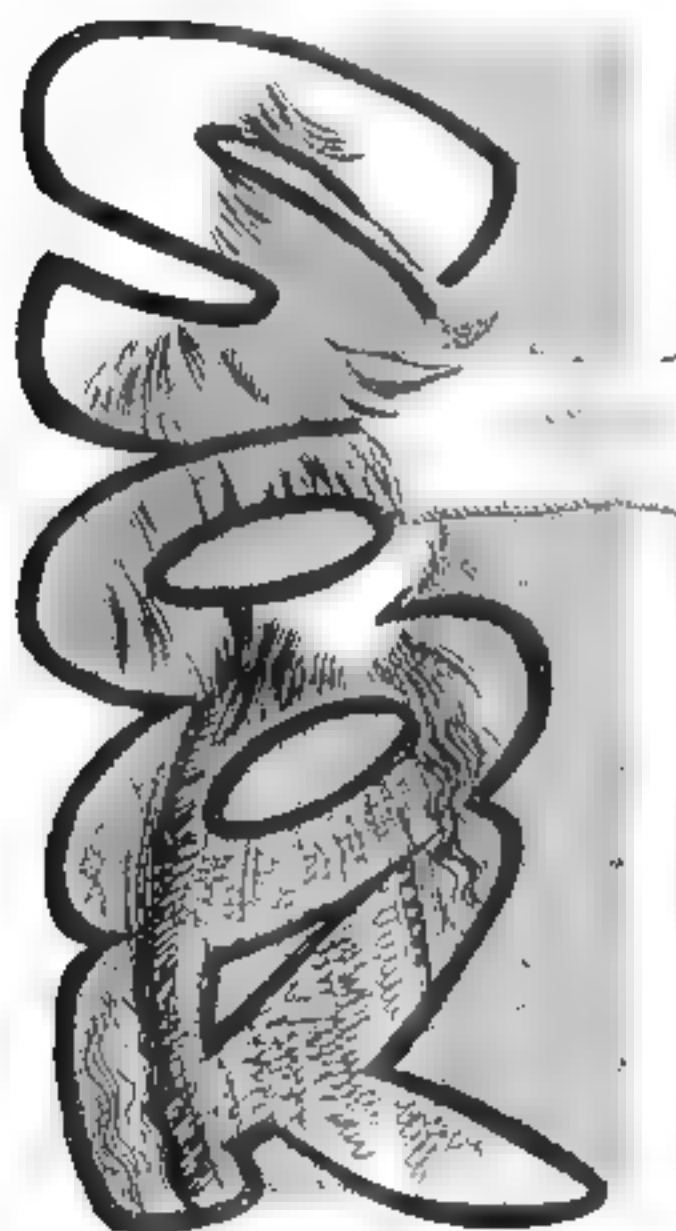


RIGHT RIGHT RIGHT! WHAT YOU'RE  
SAYING IS THAT THE "BRIDE" IS A UNIVERSAL  
SYMBOL OF THE DICHOTOMOUS UNDERPINNINGS  
OF CONVENTIONAL REALITY AS WE PERCEIVE  
IT! AND ENACTING A "RAISING UP" RITUAL  
IS A WAY TO ASSIST US IN OVERCOMING  
OUR CONVENTIONAL PERCEPTIONS  
OF REALITY!



I would not rule it  
out that that 'as  
SOOMthing to do  
with what I'm  
saying.  
No.

Question SEVEN: It is incumbent upon us, I should think, to inquire, "What is the specific 'EIGHT to which the bride desires 'er self to be raised?" If, in fact, she wishes to be raised ABOOV a specific masculine level (and I think it only gentlemanly to presuppose that she dooz), it seems to me that we moost prepare for sooch an evenchooality by forming a gentlemanly 'uman pyramid with all interested gentlemanly parties standing upon woon anoothah's shoulders (with all requirements of dispatch and decorum taken into account) in order to facillitate passing the bride oopward from 'and to 'and untill she 'as achieved 'er desired point oov bridal elevation.



K.f.

K.f.



Further, it seems not unreasonable to suppose that the said gentlemanly 'uman pyramid might need to be as much as a MILE in 'eight as 'Kee measured from gentlemanly 'uman pyramid BASE to gentlemanly 'uman pyramid 'KKE APEX



GULP.

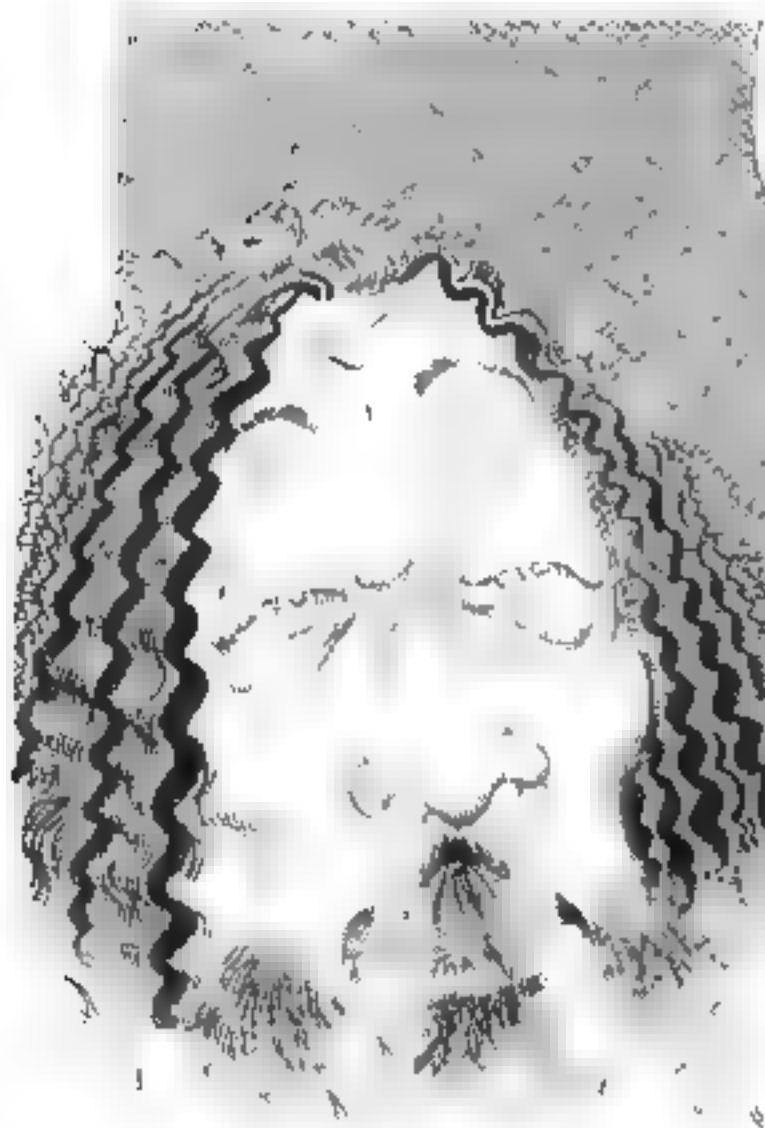
GULP.

taking it as a given that it is desirable to live more than a sufficient noombah of gentlemanly bridal footstools and NOT require them 'KKE than to find ourselves with an insufficient noombah of bridal footstools at the critical joonkchuh to which I 'ave alluded previously





RIGHT RIGHT RIGHT! SO WHAT  
YOU'RE SAYING IS THAT ENACTING THE  
METAPHOR--HAVING A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF  
MEN PARTICIPATING IN "RAISING UP" THE  
ARCHETYPAL "BRIDE"--WILL PRODUCE THE  
SAME EFFECT IN THE REAL WORLD!  
RAISING UP ALL REAL BRIDES  
ABOVE ALL REAL MEN!





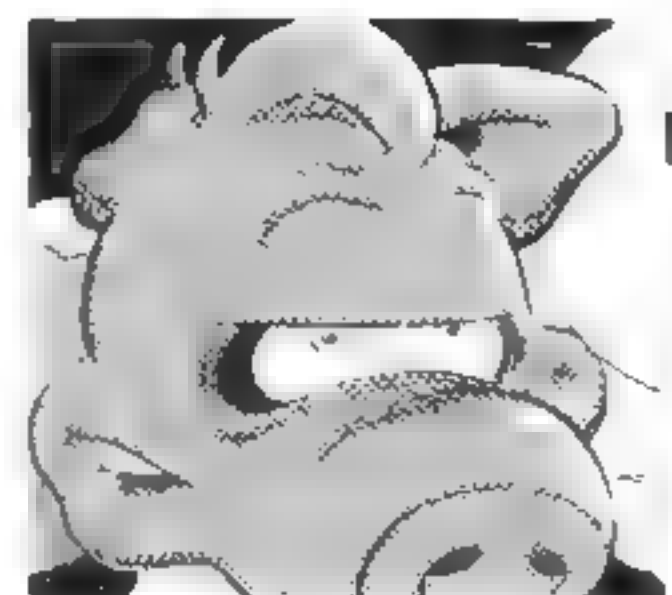
Well bugger  
me senseless if  
that isn't EXACTLY  
wot I'm saying!



HURH  
HAHAHA  
HAHAHAHA  
HA

HAHA  
HAHAHA  
HAHAHA  
HAHAHA  
HAHAHA

HURH  
HURH  
HURH



HAHA  
HAHA



Heh.

When  
Lexus  
was married

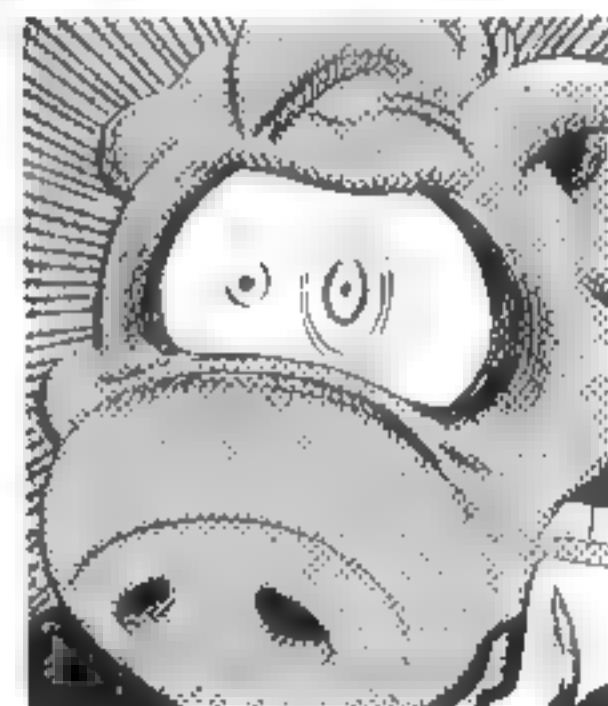
I just find the whole  
subject so far is  
killing up the drive  
Irene's the only

Last night it  
seems to me that I  
all this together some  
how and that it's doubly  
to be: but anything  
else and of course  
once a month.

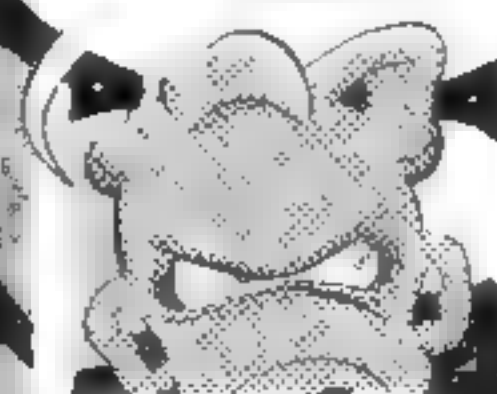
HURH  
HURH  
HURH



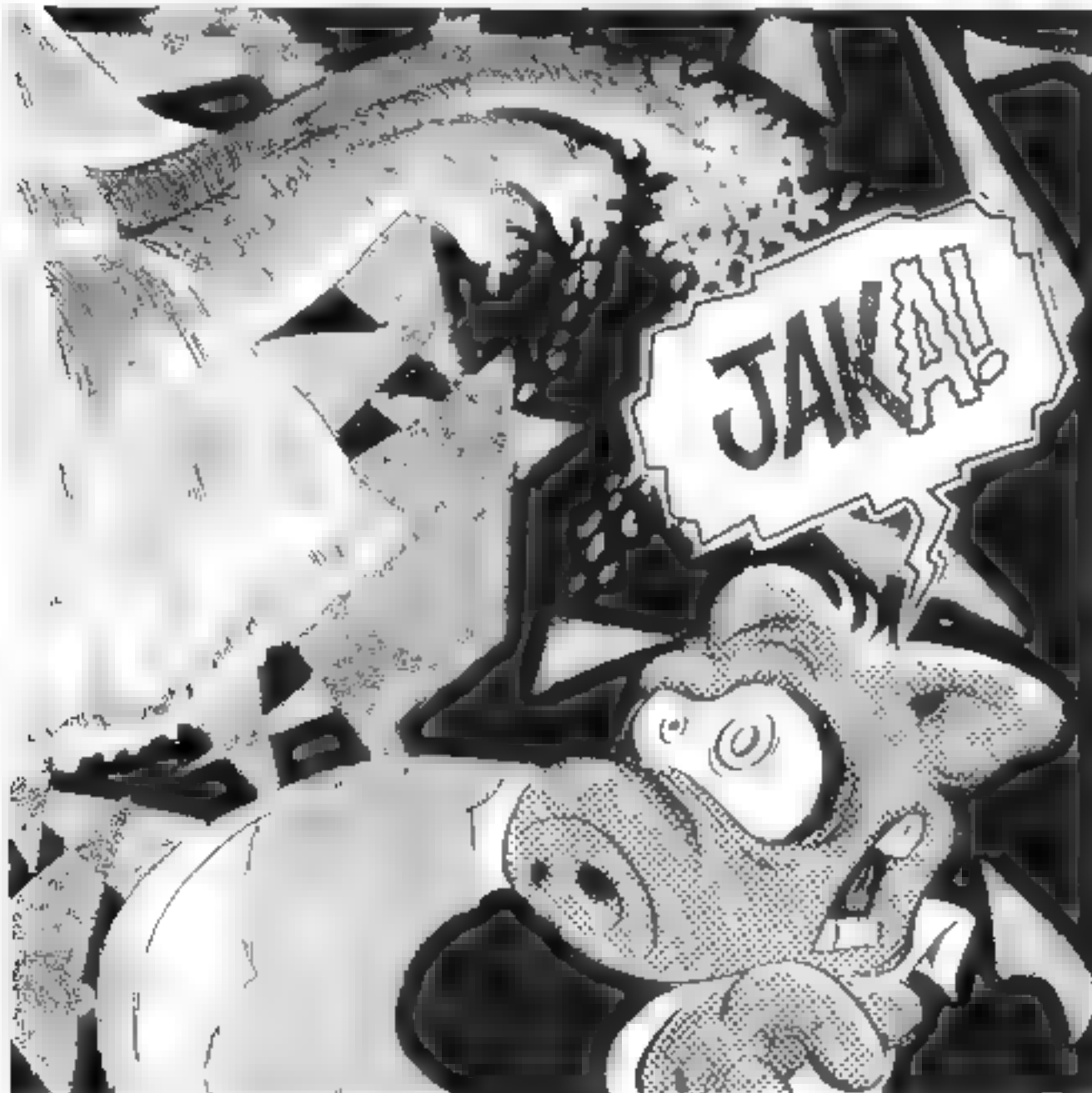
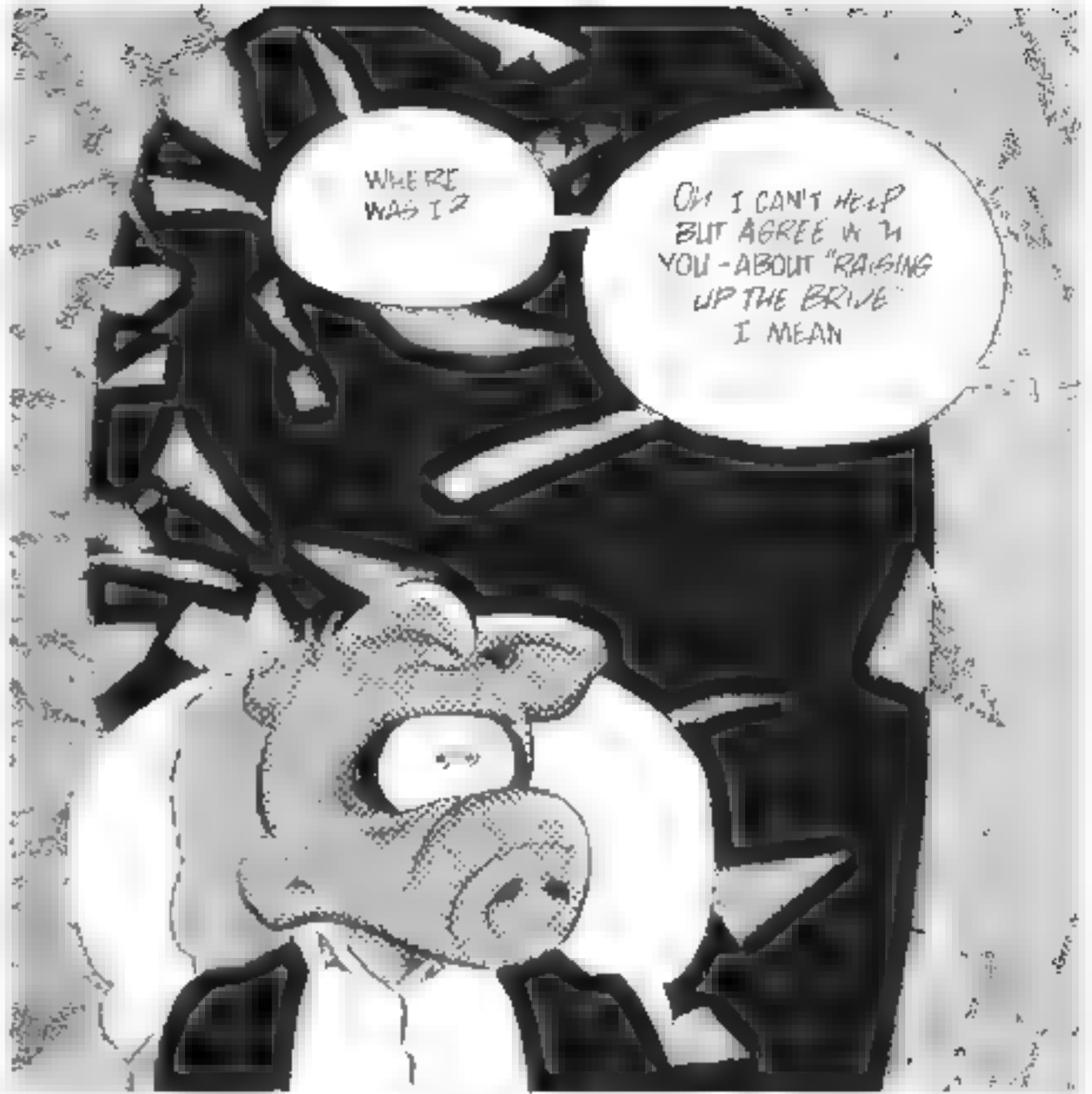
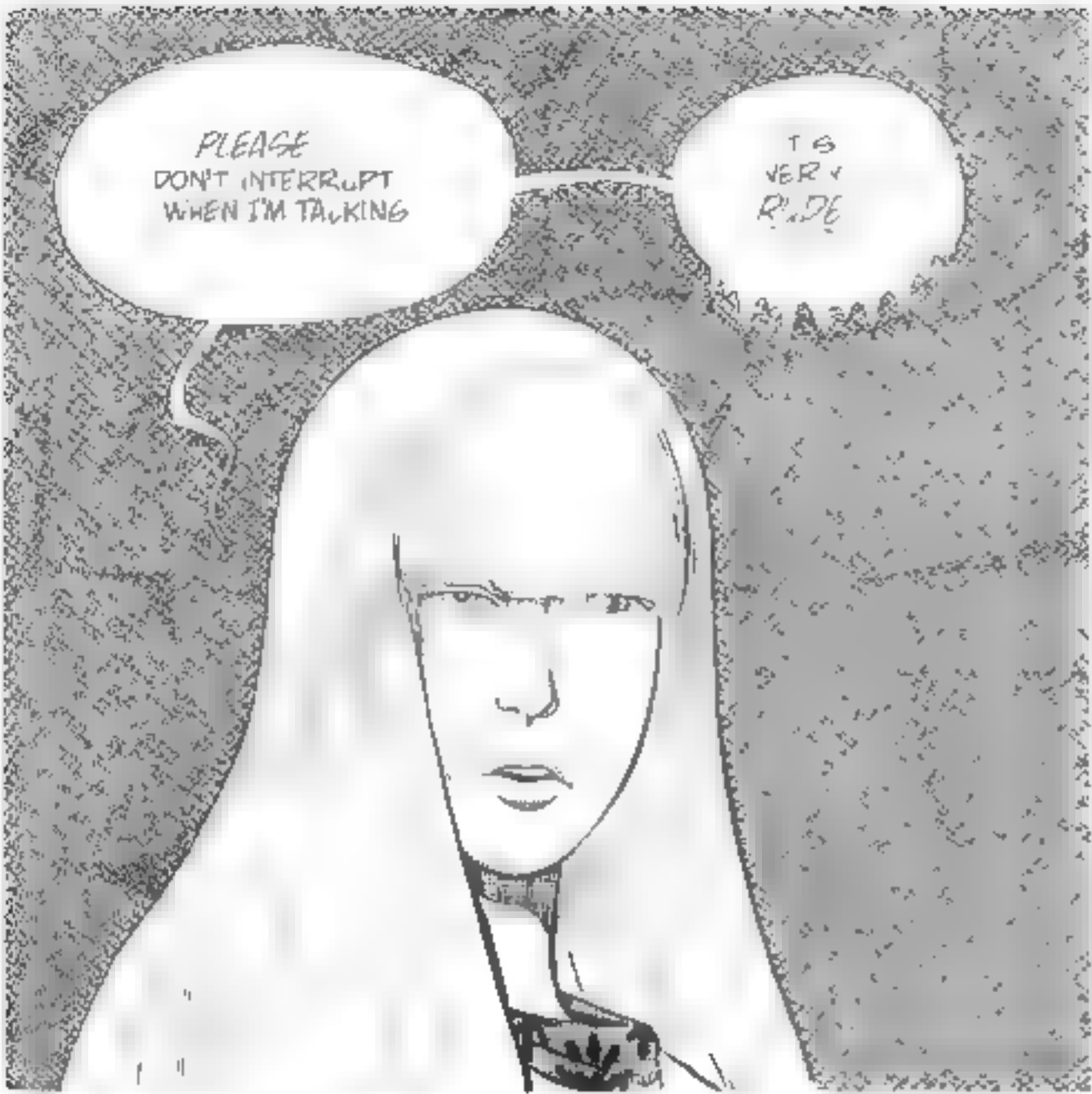
HA HA HA  
In a month  
it's all over if  
I can't do the  
whole picture



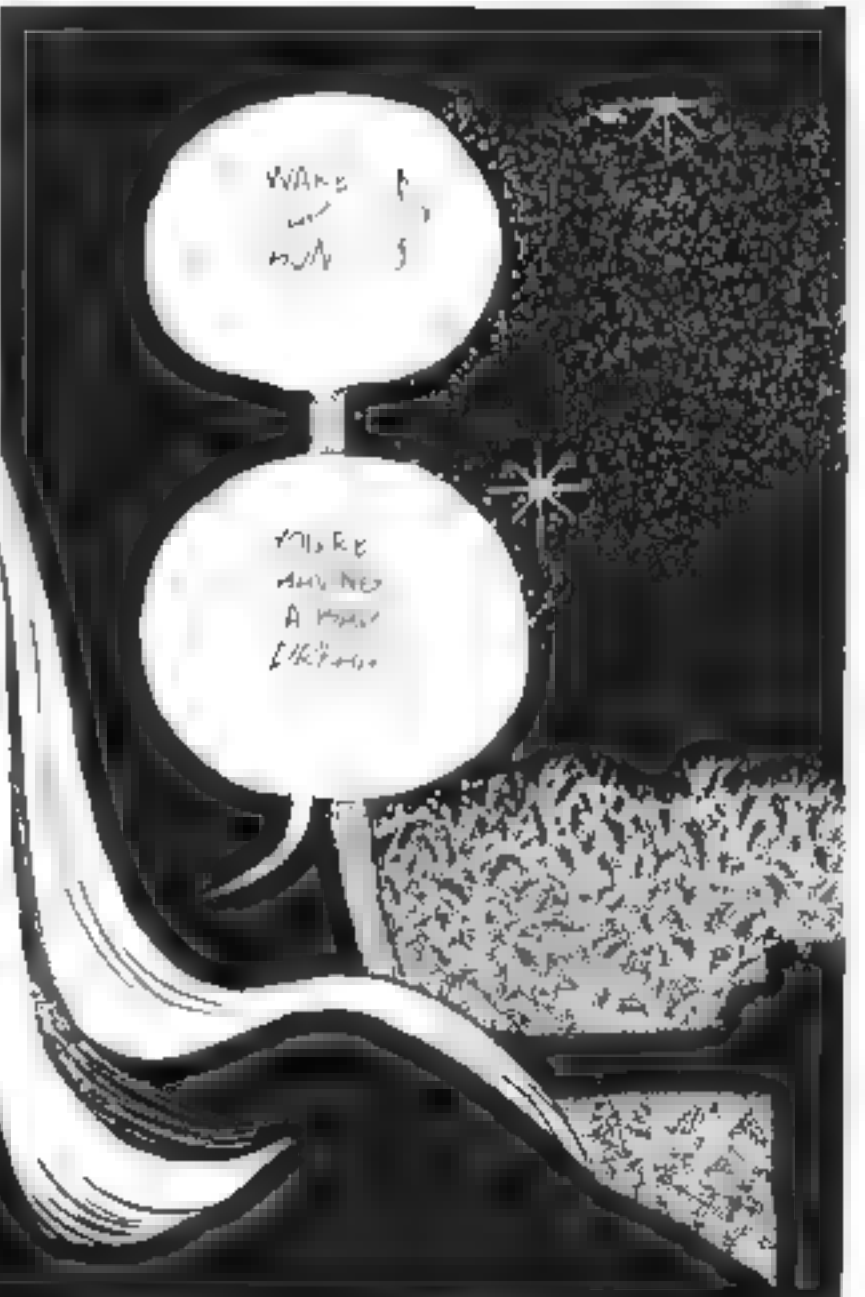
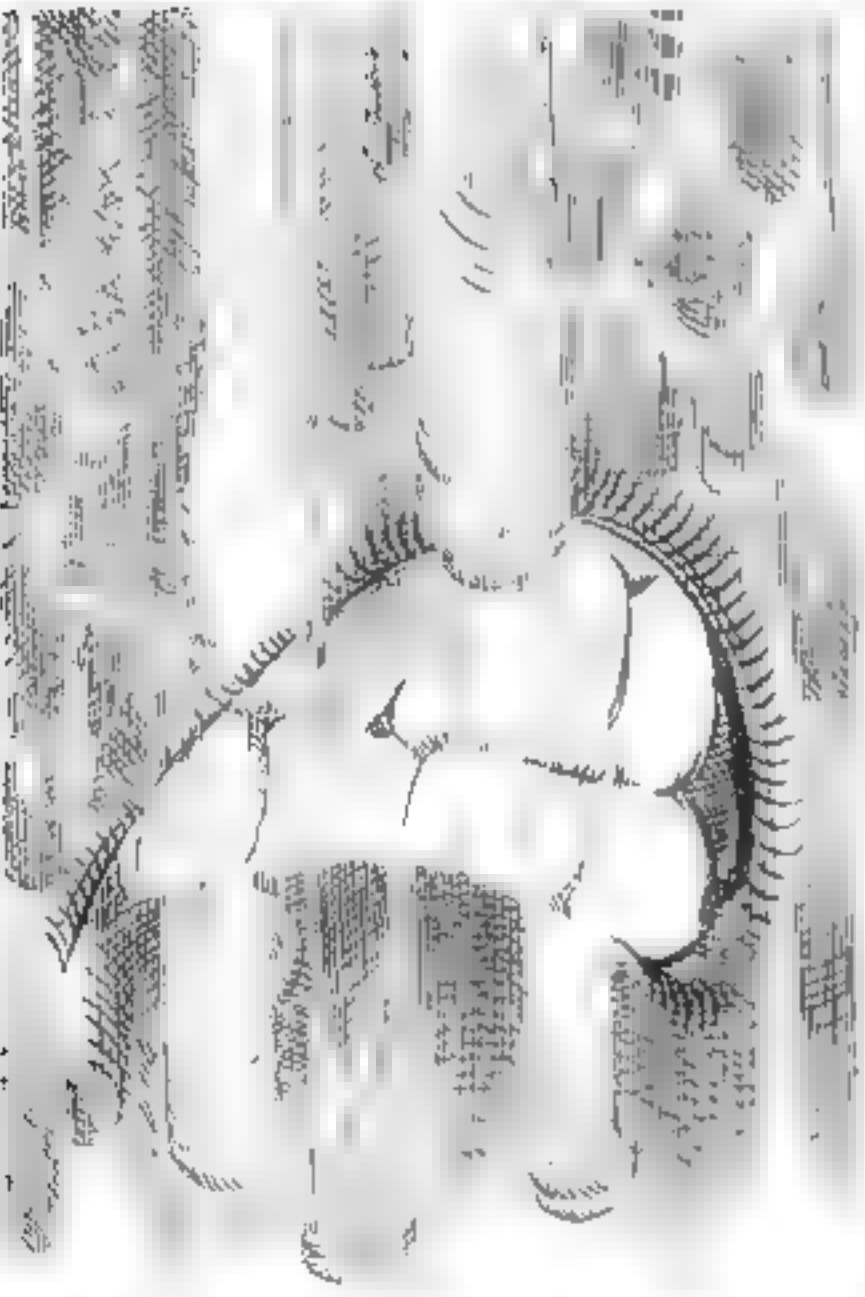
JAKA! WE HAVE  
TO GET OUT OF  
HERE!









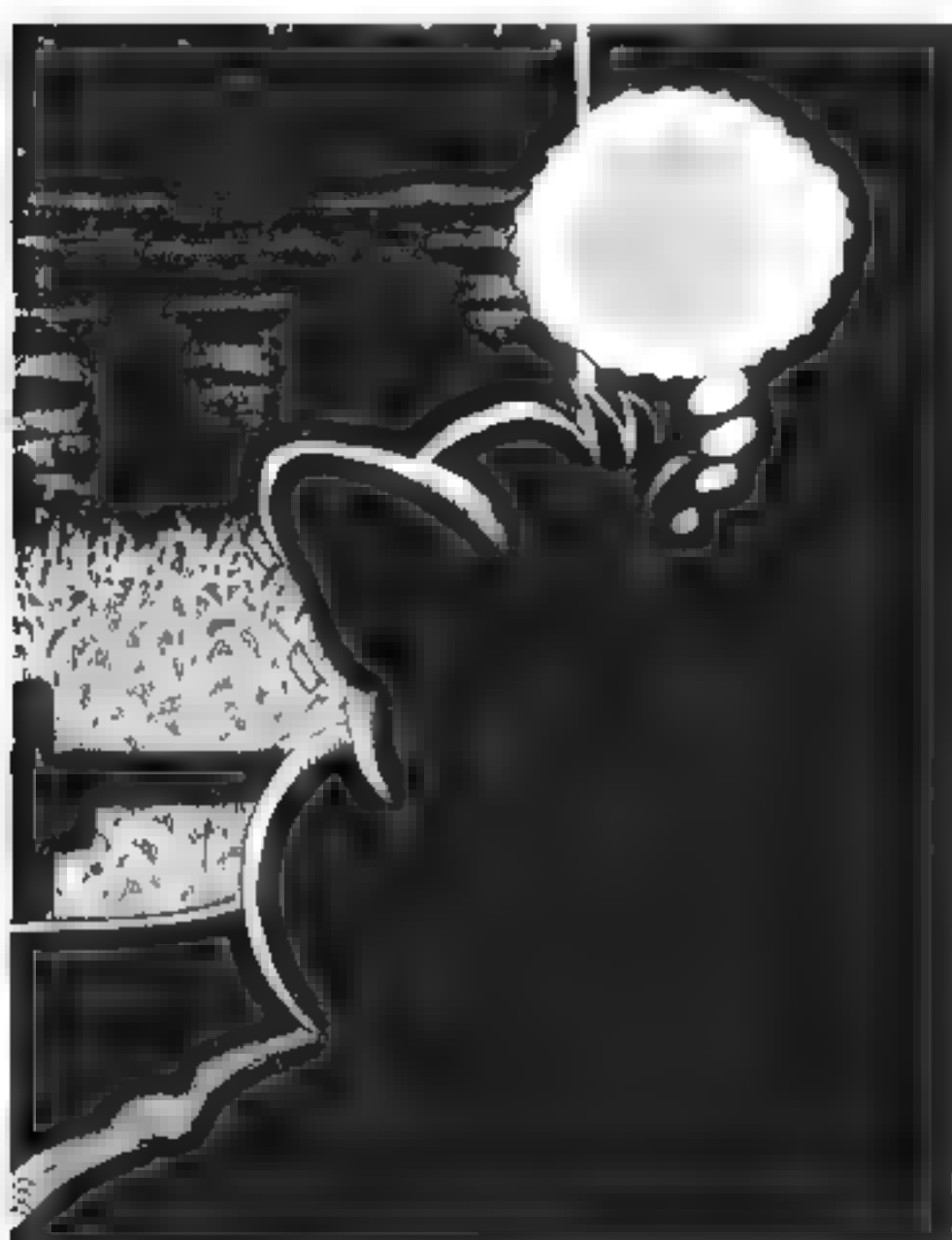


YOL  
OKAY?

UH?!

Oh.

AYE.

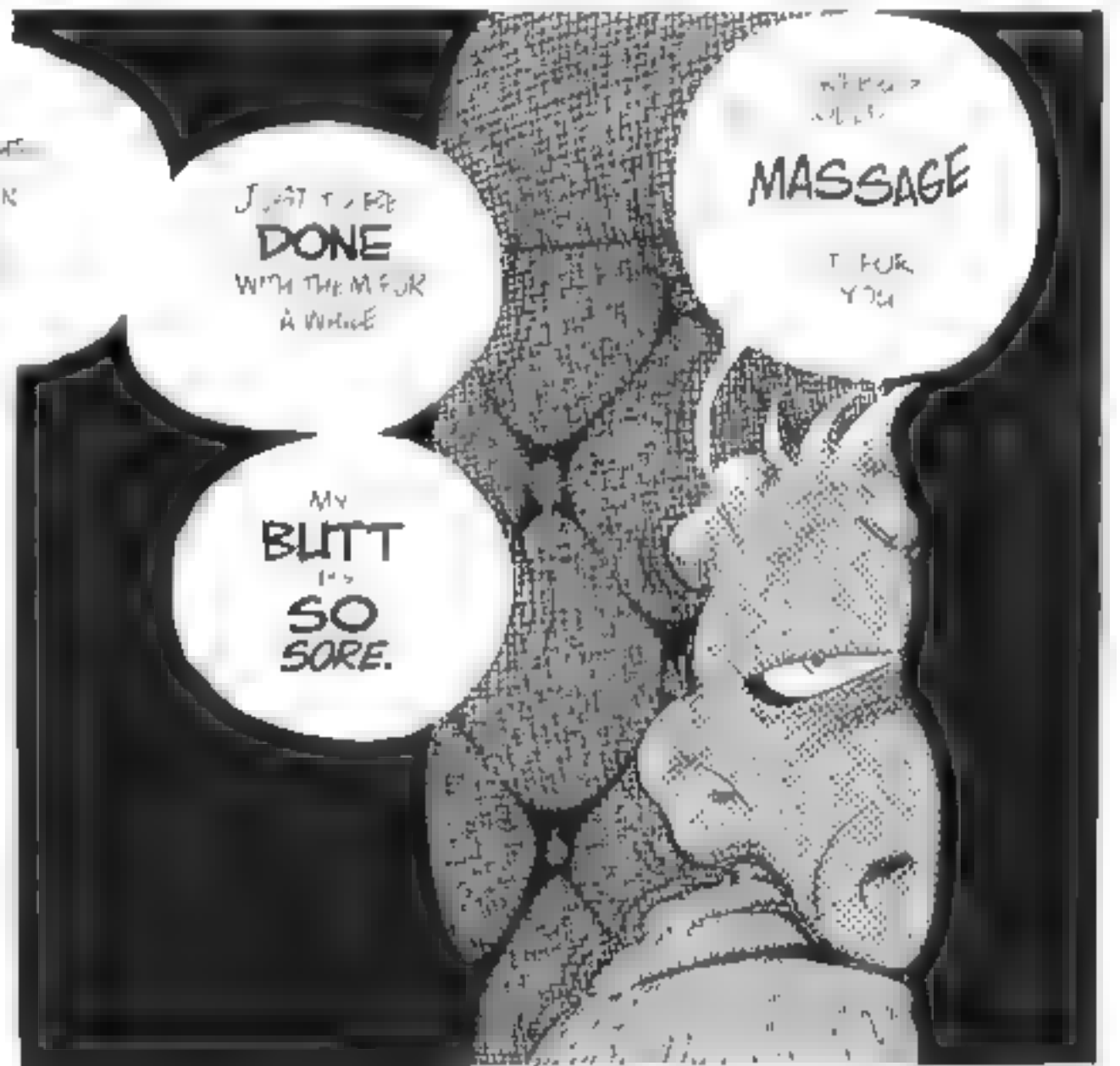
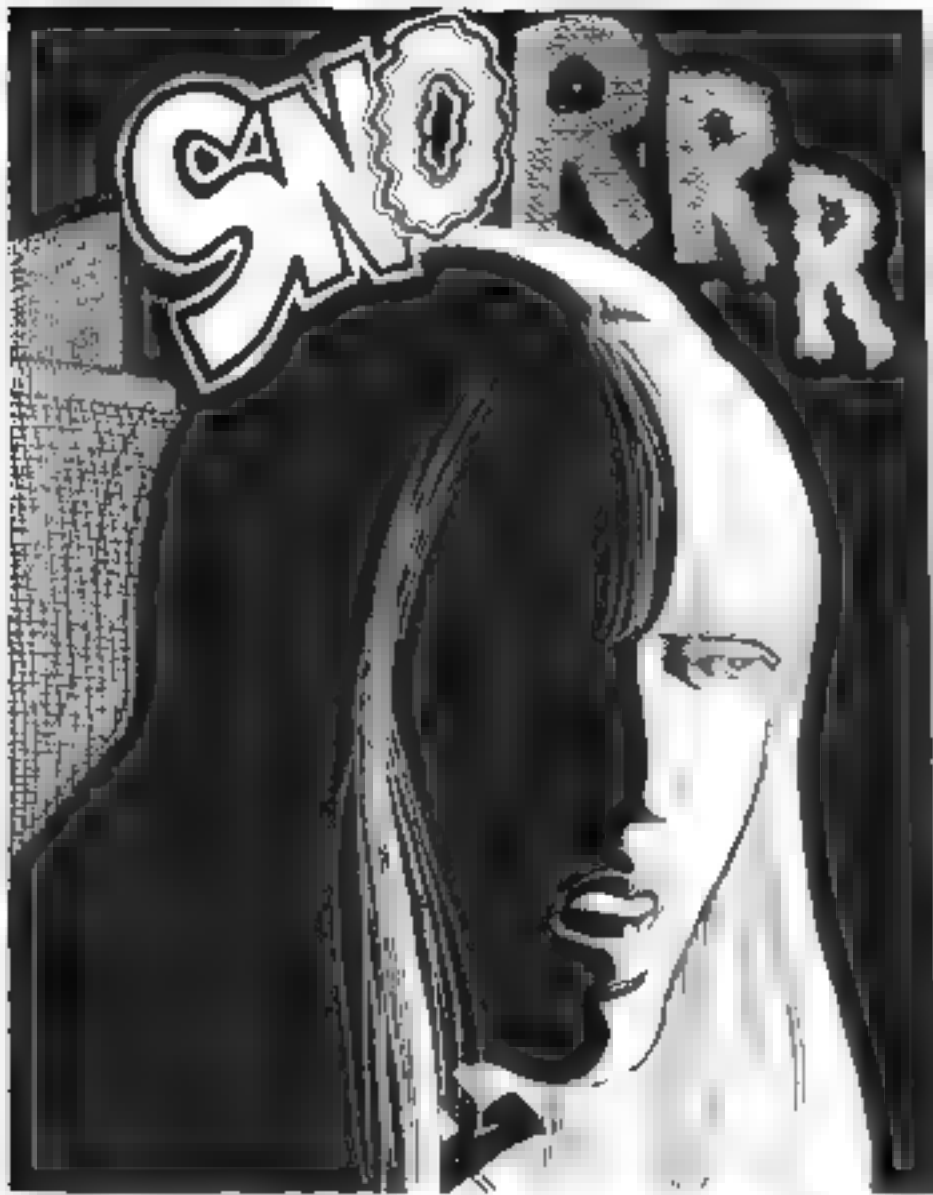


HOW LONG  
HAS CEREBUS  
BEEN ASLEEP?



OH YOL DROPPED RIGHT  
OFF AS SOON AS WE LEFT  
MURDER MURDER FANS

SC AT LEAST  
HE'D BEEN WITH  
SOME SLEEP  
RIGHT









WERE  
REALLY  
HERE







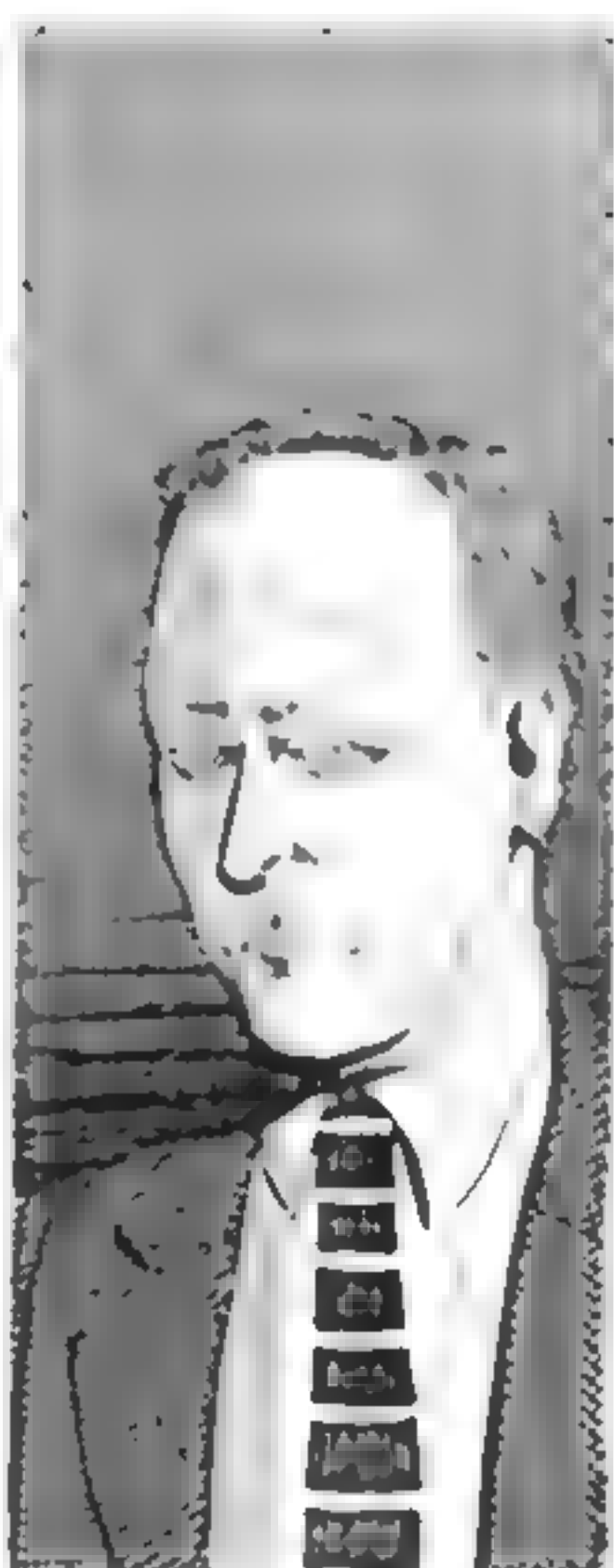
# FALL AND THE RIVER

**“Scott was drunk a good deal of the time back then, but that didn’t distinguish him from anyone else in Great Neck.”**

Groucho Marx on former  
Great Neck, Long Island  
neighbour F. Scott Fitzgerald

**“...a sick old man — not very funny stuff.”**

Groucho Marx on the sober  
Fitzgerald in Hollywood  
ca. 1937





entirety.

#### AWAKENING

Sunlight, sudden and brilliant, washed a silent and majestic wave of gold across aged, decaying timbers and into each corner and crevice of the bustling dockside scene at Moresh. Before the unexpected onslaught the gray and dismal morning fled, finding refuge — here and there — in the cramped confines of small and sullen shadows.

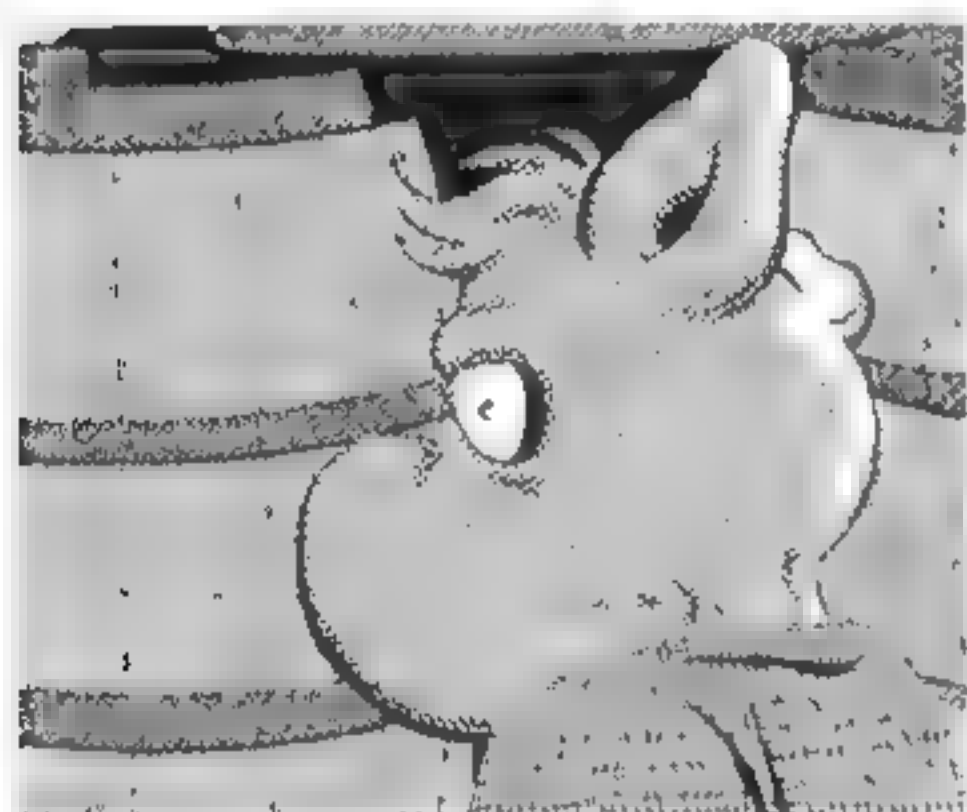
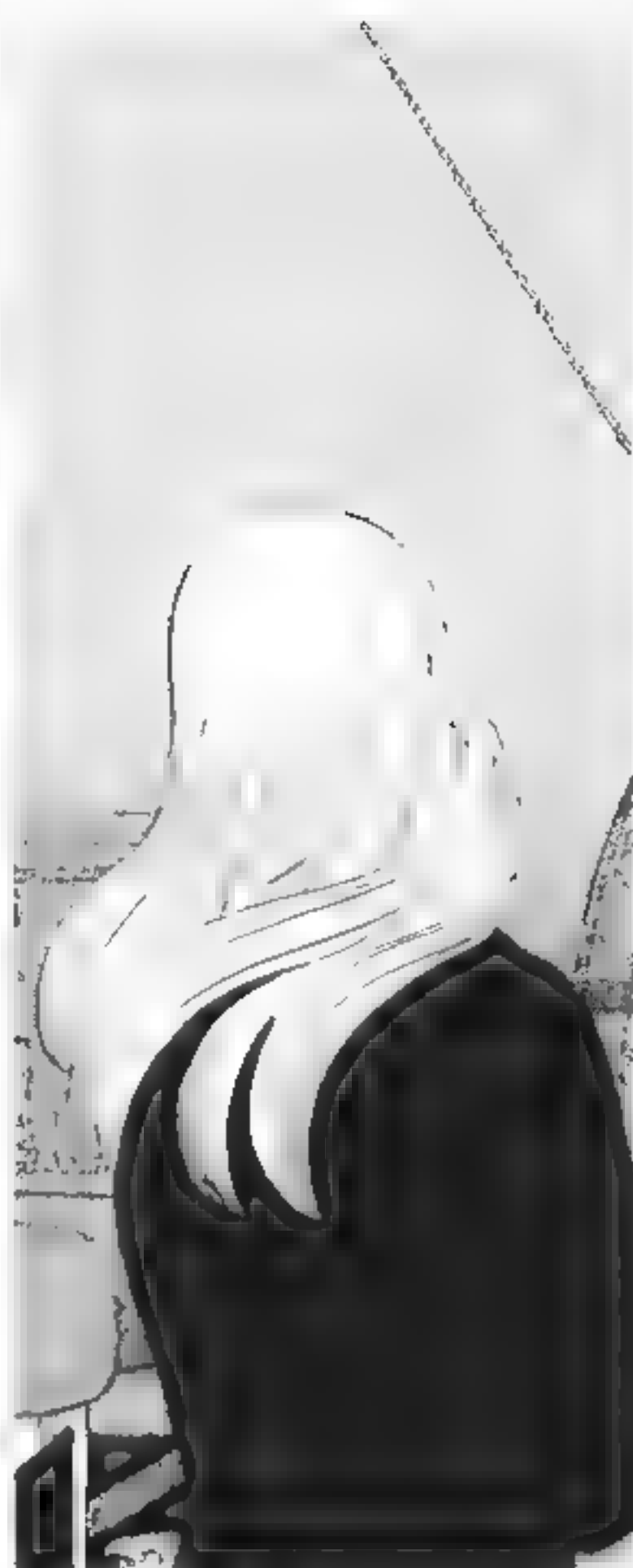
The gilded brilliance and warmth passed over, around, and through Jay Anthony Diver, and some small part of his mordant introspection and studied indifference seemed to melt a little in its wake. Unwitting embers of interest lit the blackened ashes of his dormant curiosity, and — with a single languid movement of his head — Anthony looked around.

Their eyes met and embraced in a momentary *frisson* of recognition. In the next instant she had looked away, her unmistakable aristocratic features finding concealment behind the rippling curtain of her breeze-blown hair.

Her companion, thick-set and dwarfish, left off his critical examination of the massive barge rocking gently at anchor before him and strained his attentions towards her. Listening intently for a few moments, he began to turn in Anthony's direction. She gestured sharply and the movement was arrested.

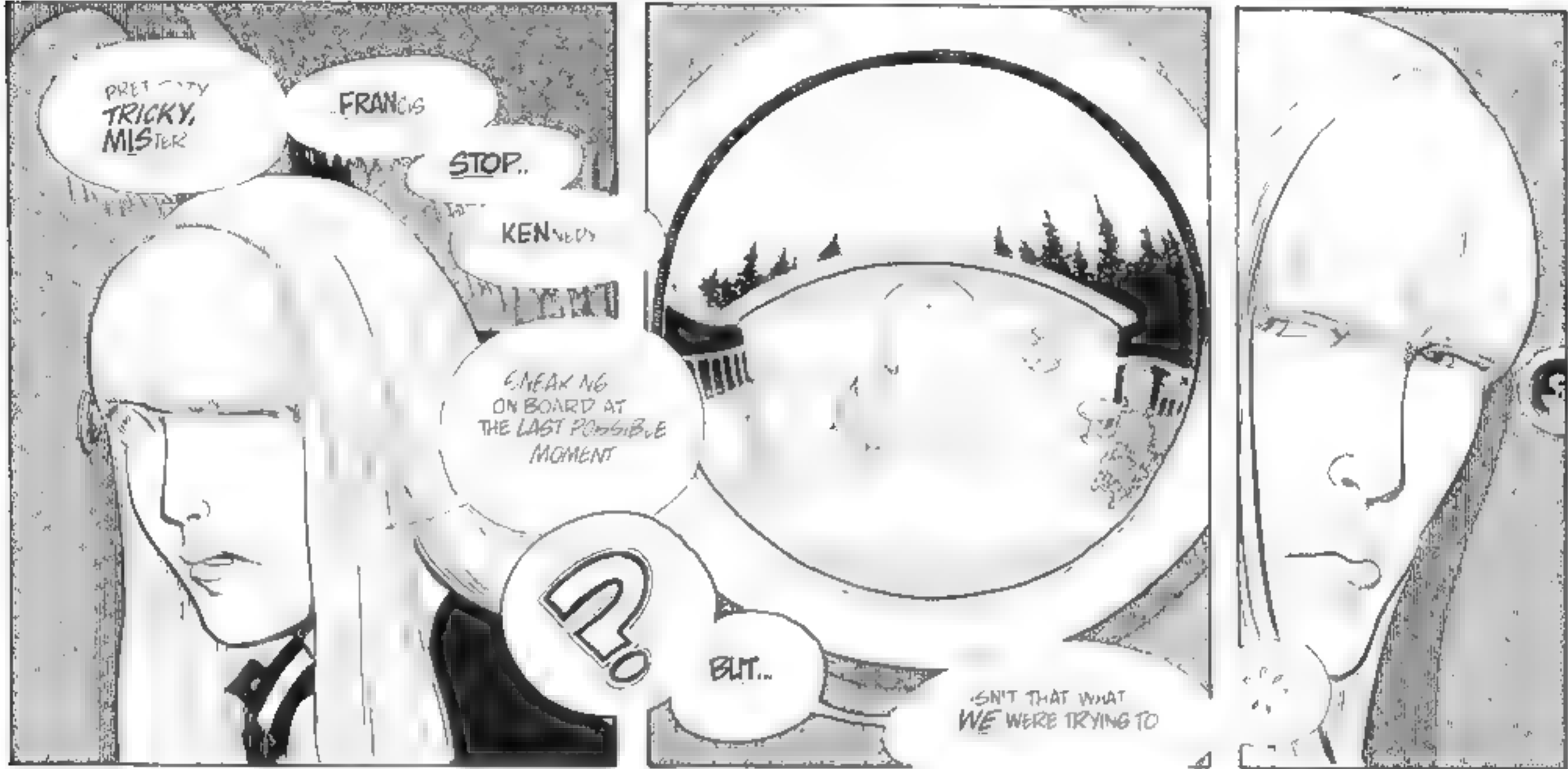
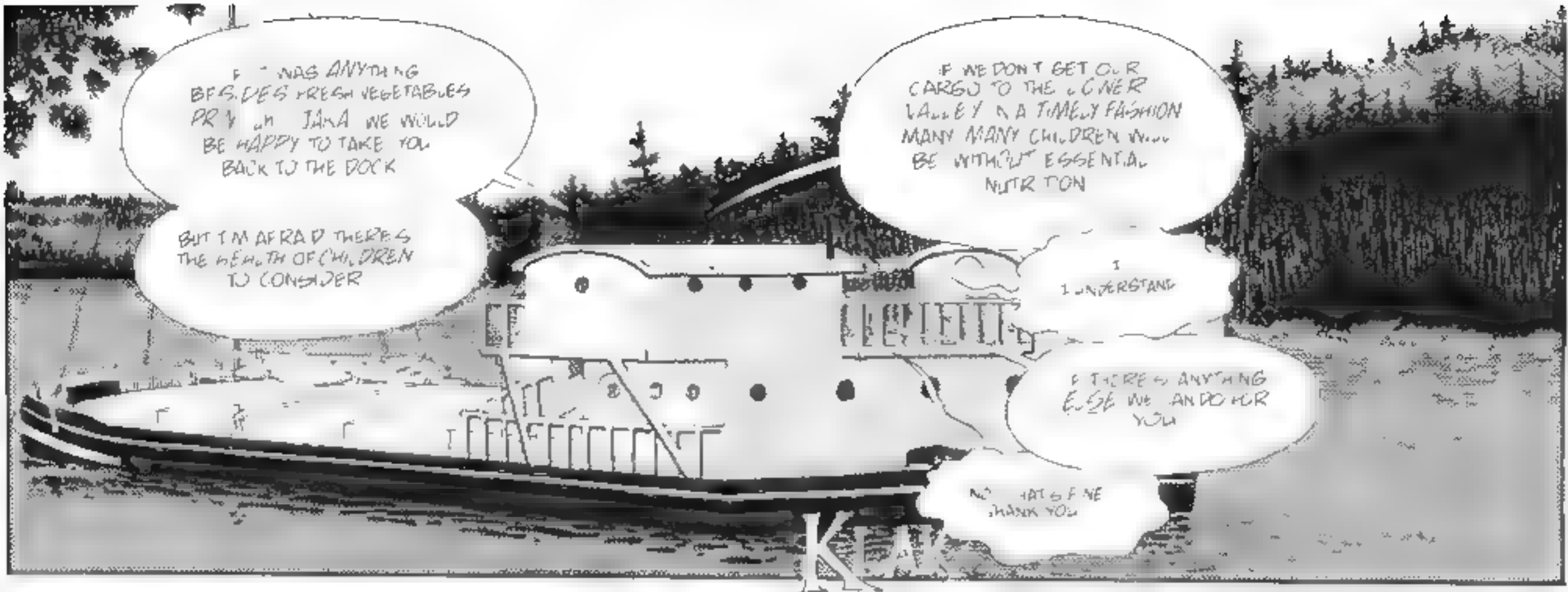
For the first time in a very, very long while, the slightest trace of a smile began to play at the corners of Jay Anthony Diver's mouth.

"I'm being discussed," he thought, experiencing the strange mixture of rueful apprehension and hopeful, wounded vanity that served as the frayed and faded tapestry of mood before which he enacted — rather than lived — this particular period of his life.



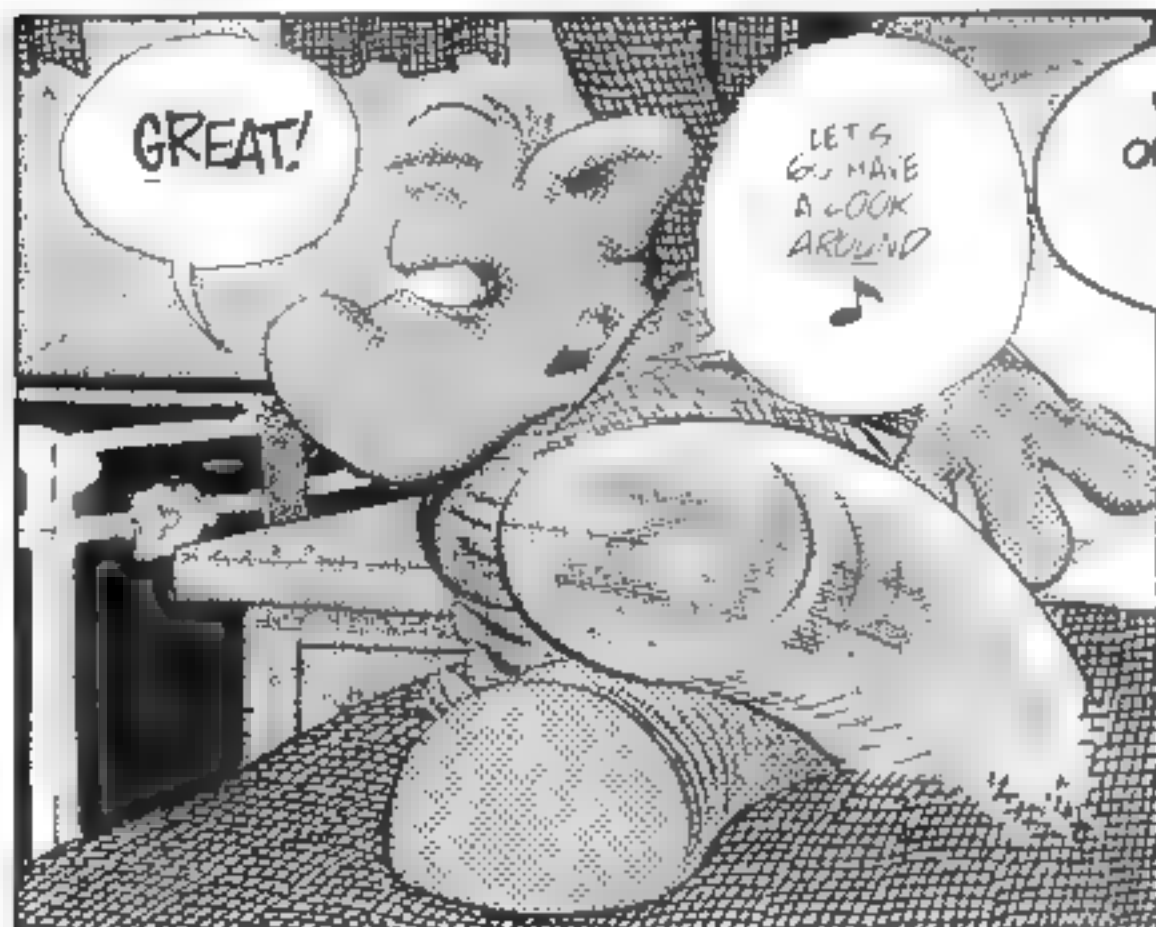
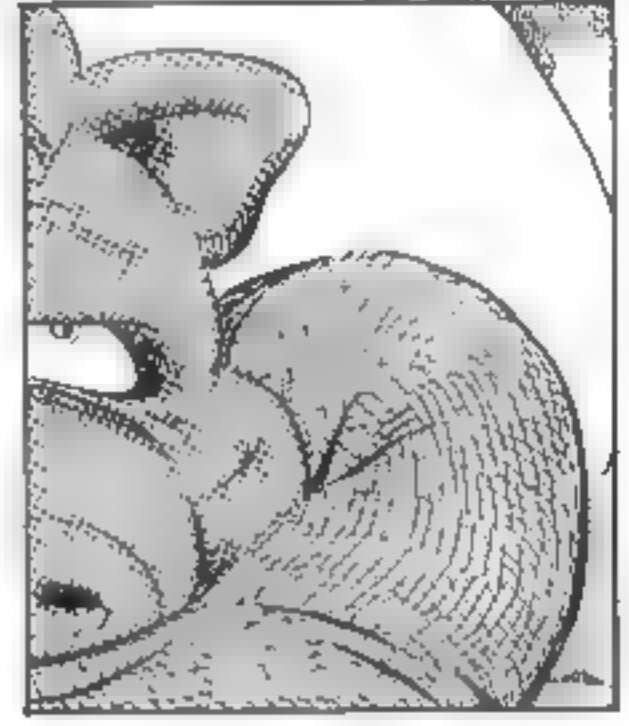
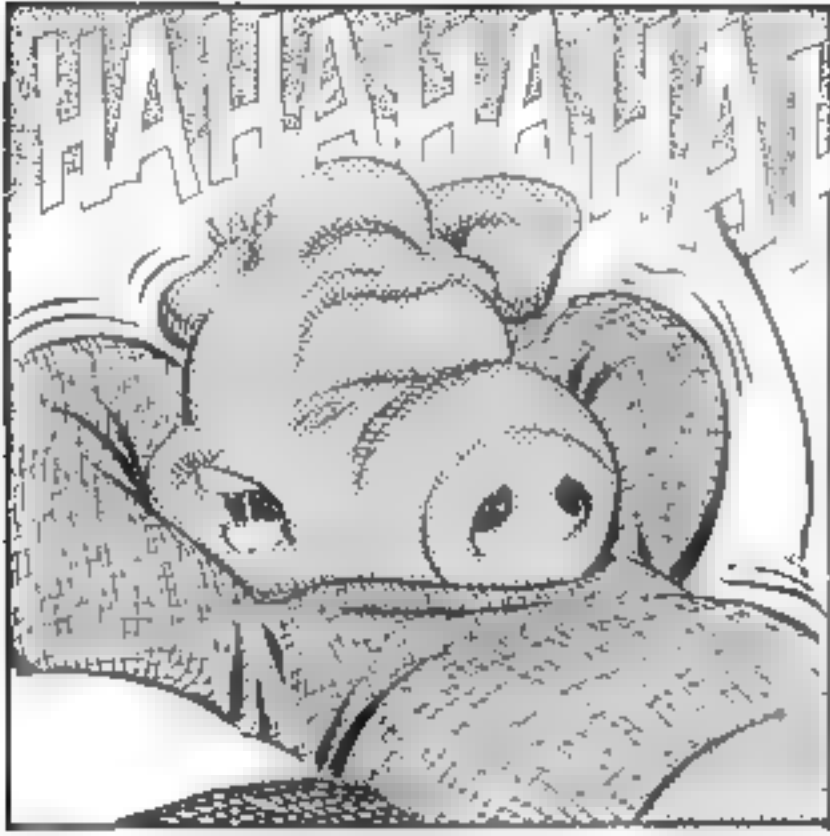














making a *stew*!"

It had been a simple and sophomoric  
 which they had thought might enliven the  
 lives of these wealth-encumbered "world-  
 who seemed always to have exhausted all e-  
 human energies in their s-  
 insular materialism and si-  
 as a result, from the the  
 mere entertainers -A  
 could console him rof  
 it had been broug it  
 his own hard la  
 discount the perce. wh  
 from whatever mo to fl  
 would find themse han  
 foolish that they in i  
 first place



in those days, it had seemed that he and Xena had existed in a glittering world of Anthony's creation—far above conventional conceits of decorum and “proper” conduct. If Xena had danced that night—provocatively and alone—and had needed to be assisted to their room by liveried servants, why, Jay Anthony Diver could not be more pleased. Xena was remarkable, singular, exceptional, and these dull-witted dowagers and gold-hatted gadflies should count it their great good fortune and privilege to have been a part of Xena's audience, however temporarily.

Anthony had swaddled himself and his drink within an approximation of this attitude when he had been approached, tentatively, by his host's niece.

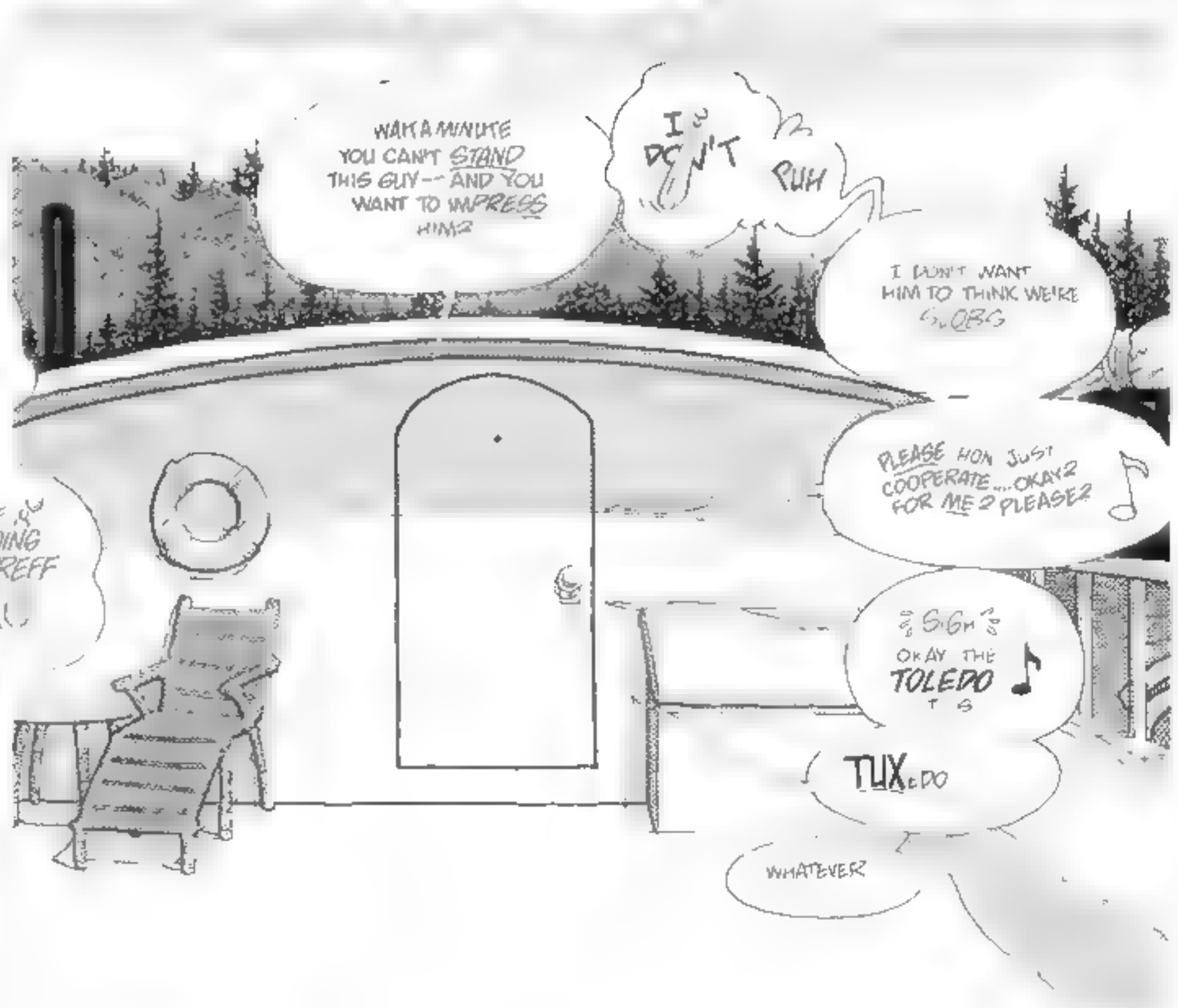
“I'm so sorry about your wife.”

Jay Anthony had smiled at her through a thin aperture in his self-restraint. Ginevra. Ginevra, the much-loved “people's princess.” Rumour had it that she had only recently returned to her palatial homestead under a cloud of scandal. She had been working as a common tavern dancer—which had, evidently, caused her to miscarry her unborn child. Events subsequent to this, it was said, had led to her husband's imprisonment and might yet lead to his execution.

“From what I understand,” he had remarked, drily, “I'm rather sorry about your husband as well.”

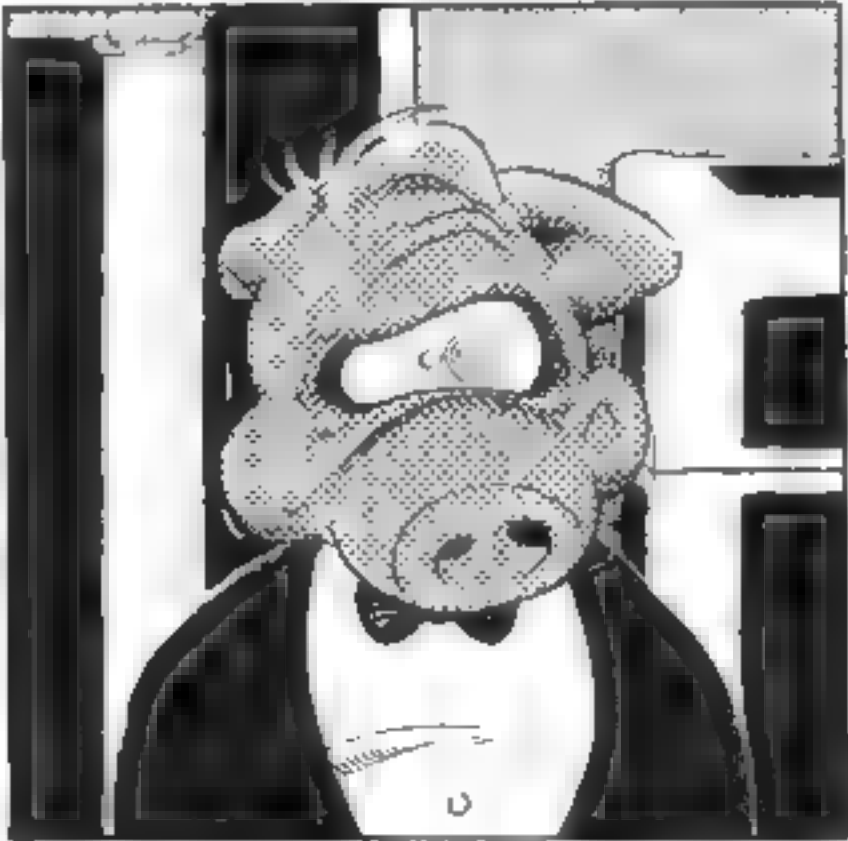
Her features had gone quite dark with rage, and she had left him there, regretting his insensitivity. Only briefly, of course. Back in those days, within innumerable bottles (brightly illustrated with deceptively amusing pictures of their host), sensitivity and insensitivity had swum side by side. In the fiery dregs, the two would become indistinguishable, and it often seemed that decanting another bottle represented the best hope of restoring them to their adversarial existence.

Ginevra's features—and his regret at being the instrument of their transfiguration—had lingered, inexplicably, in his memory even as the night drew on into the misty realms of early morning. A



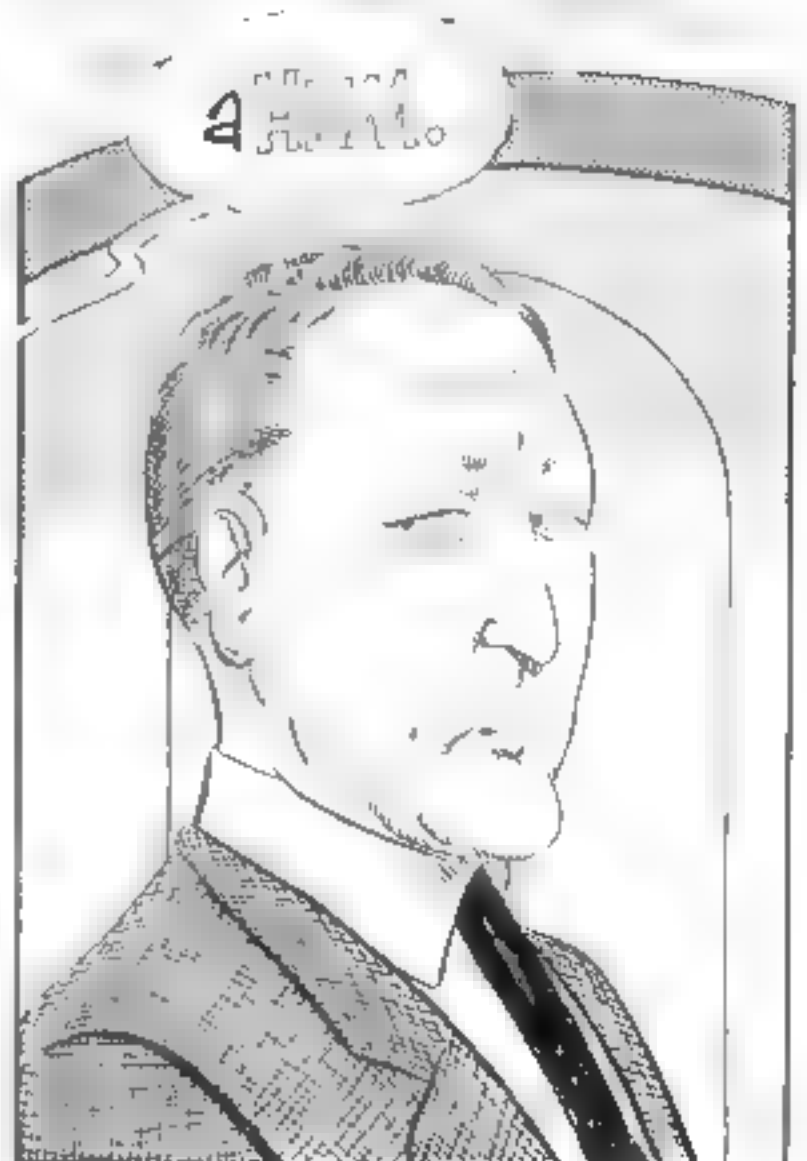
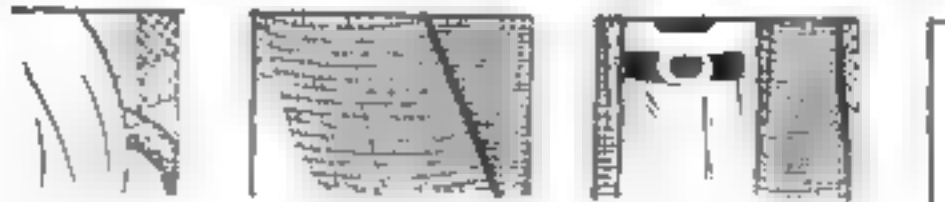




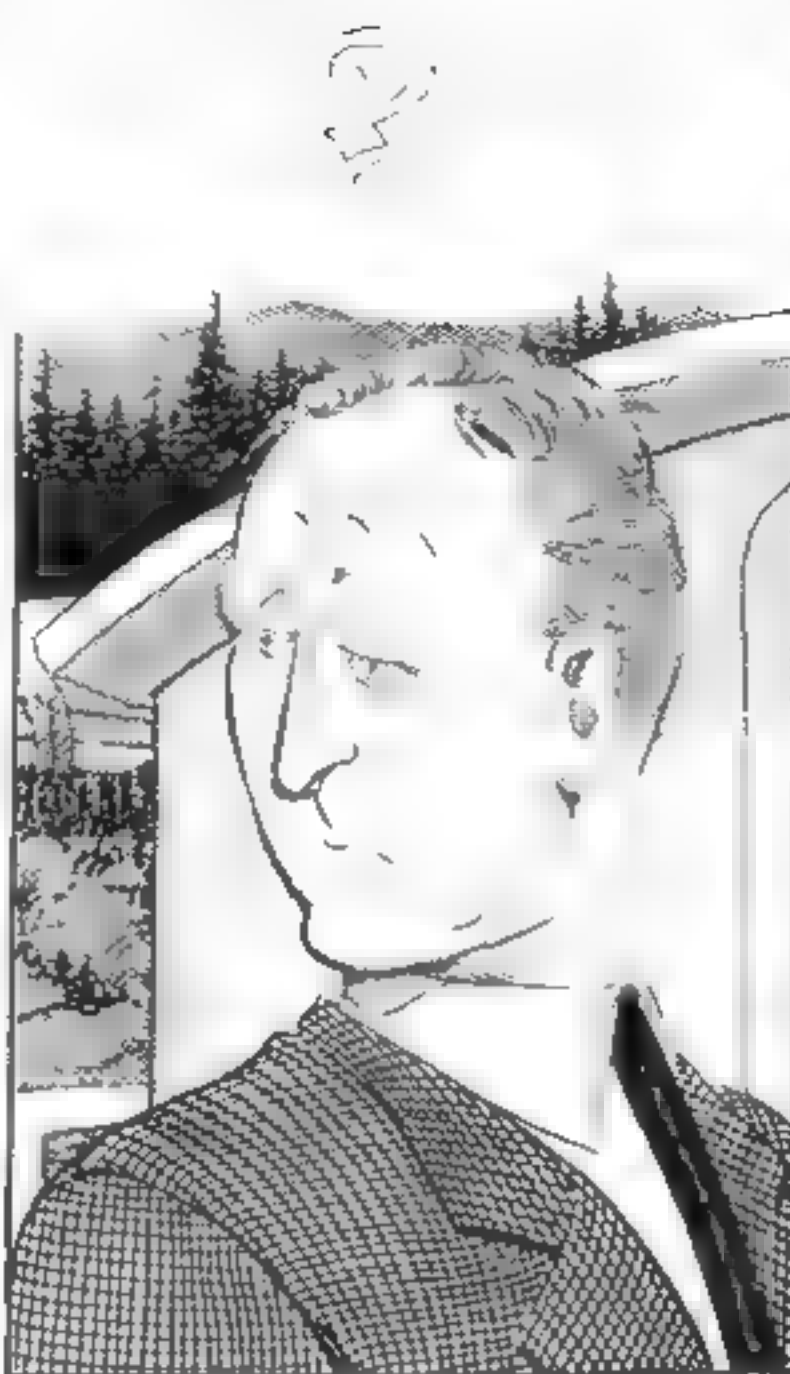
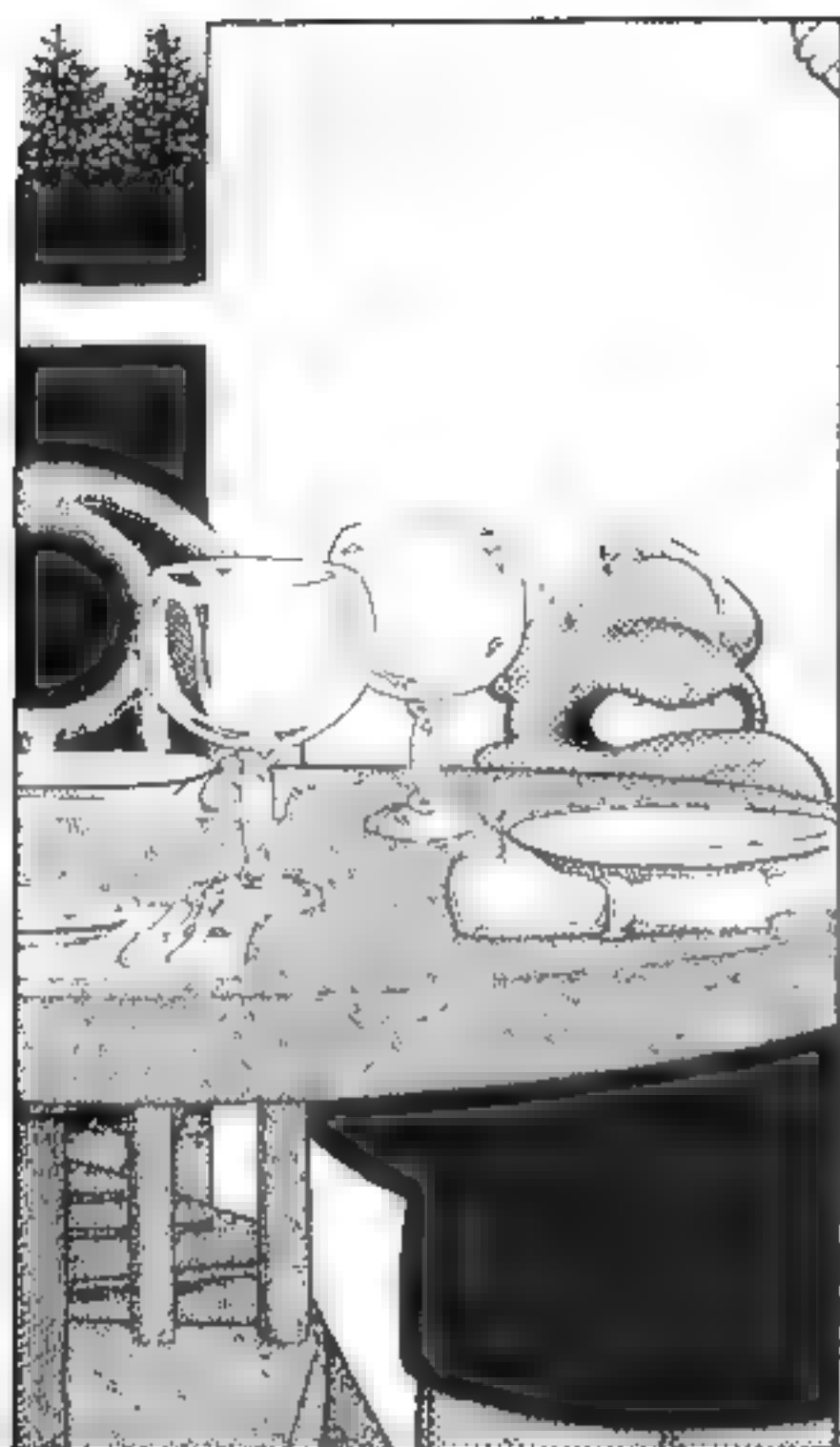


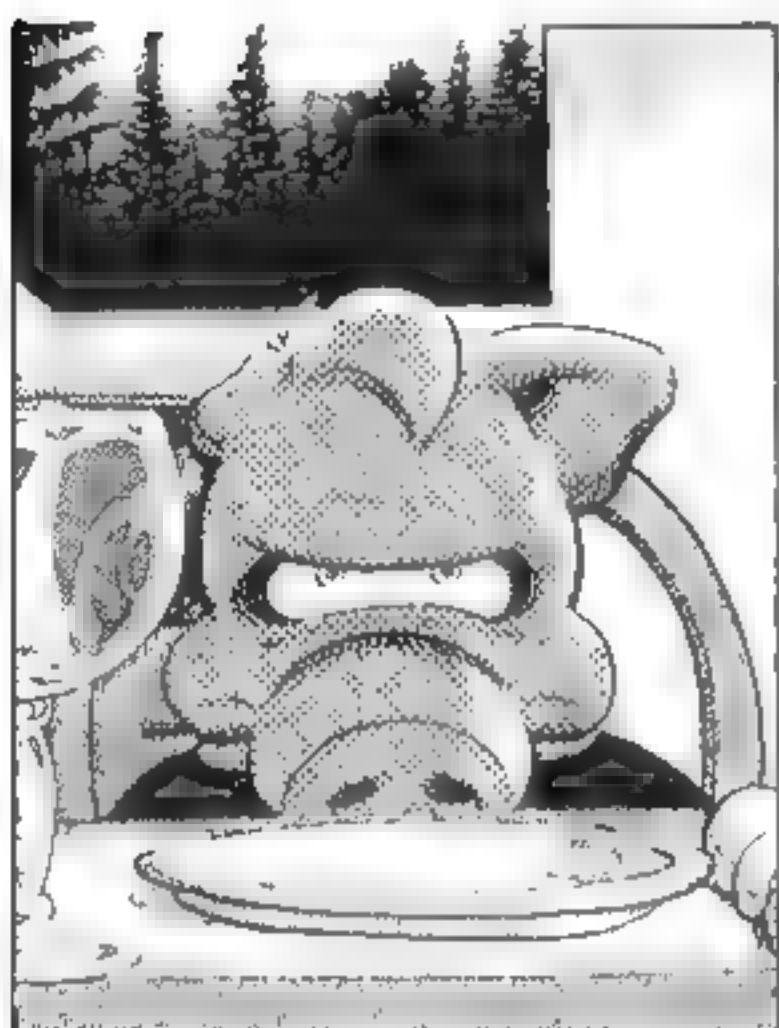


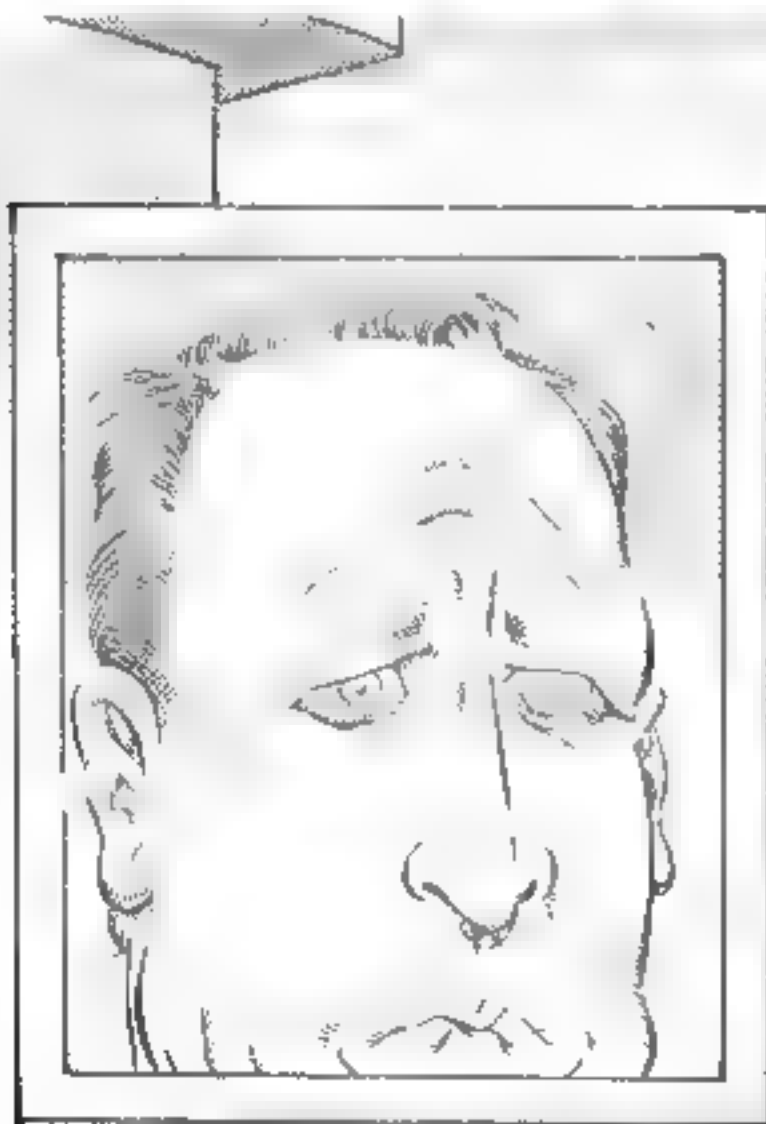
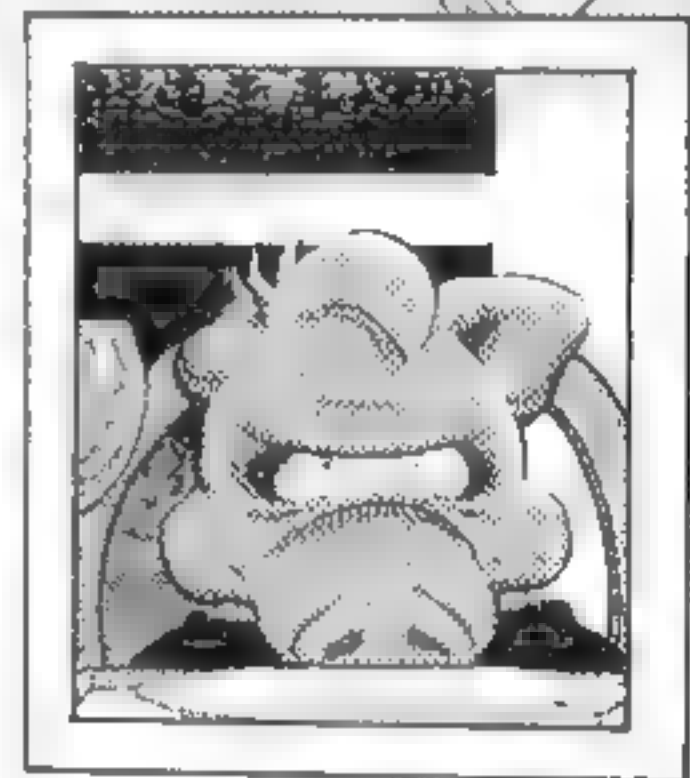
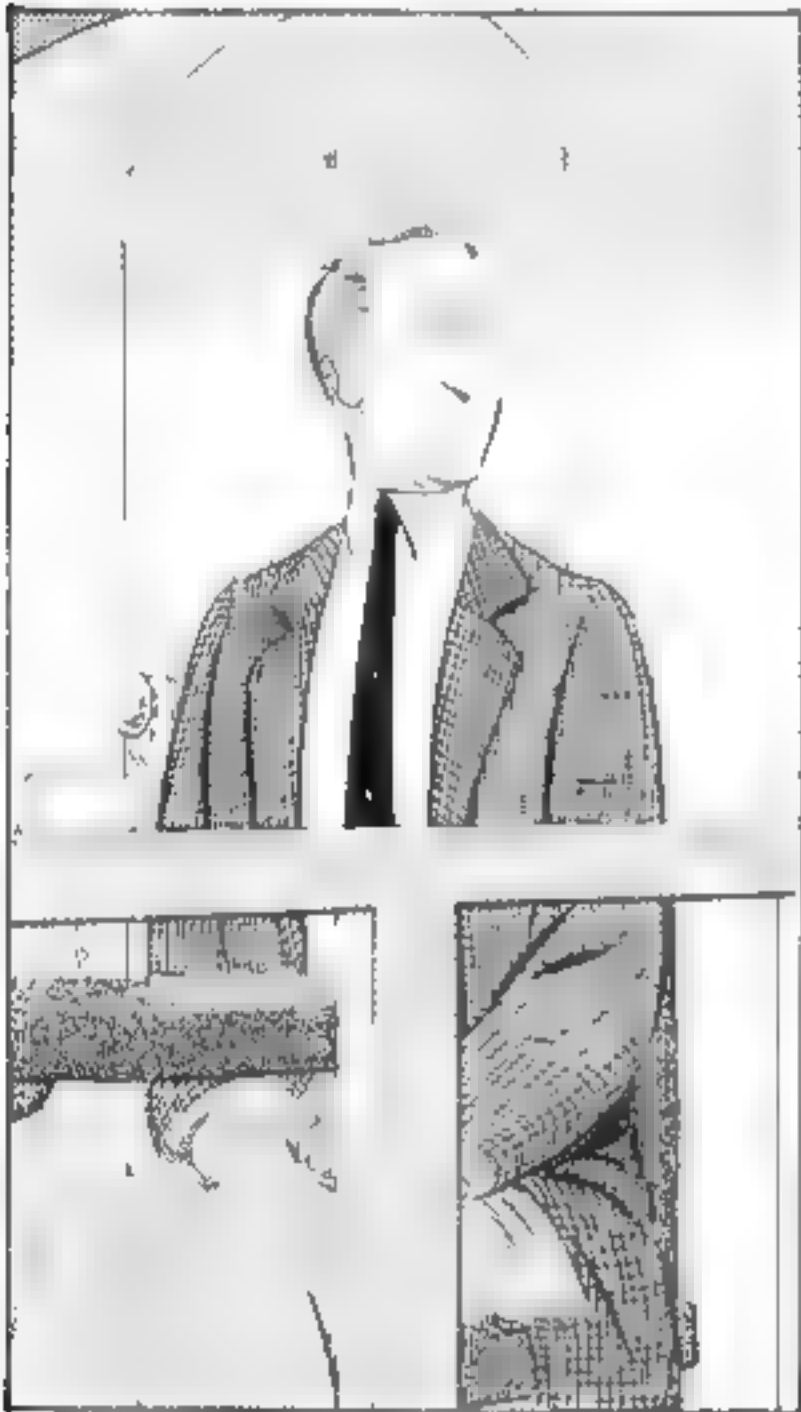
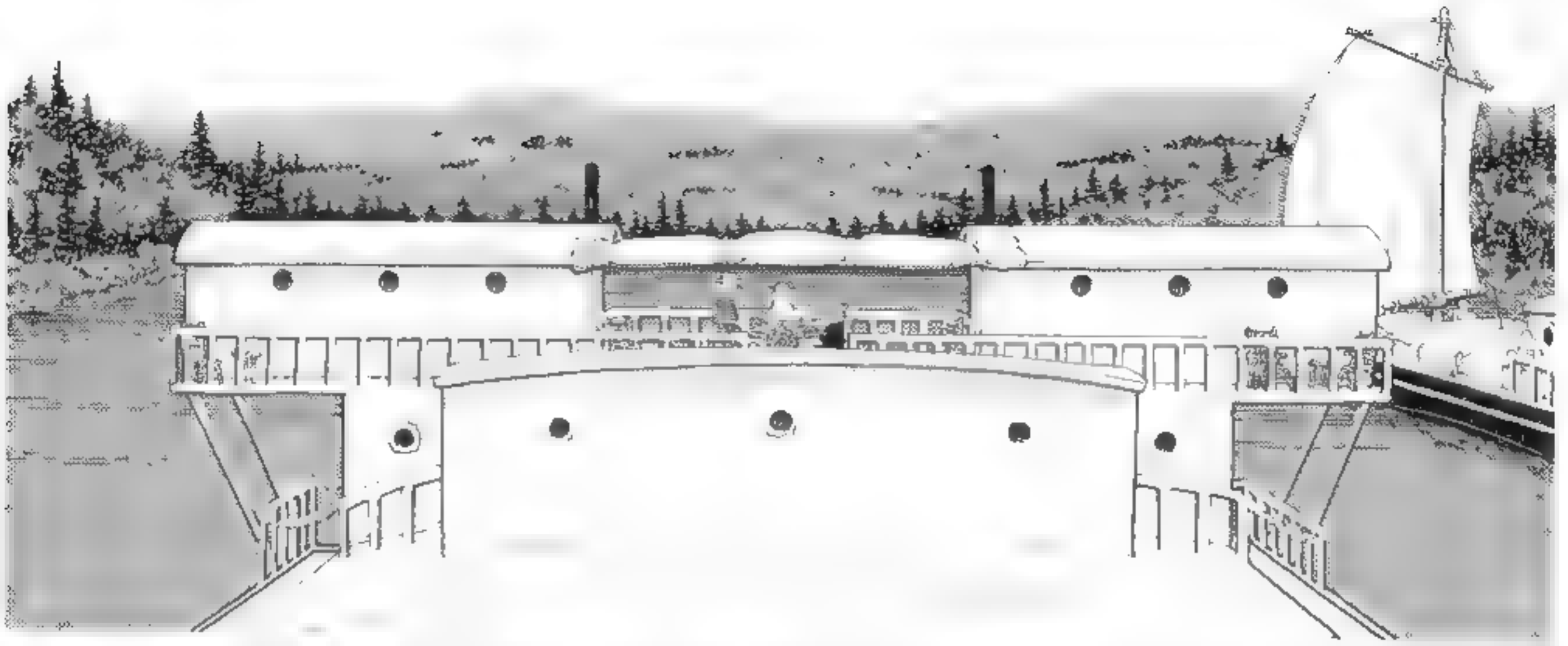
KA-KAK



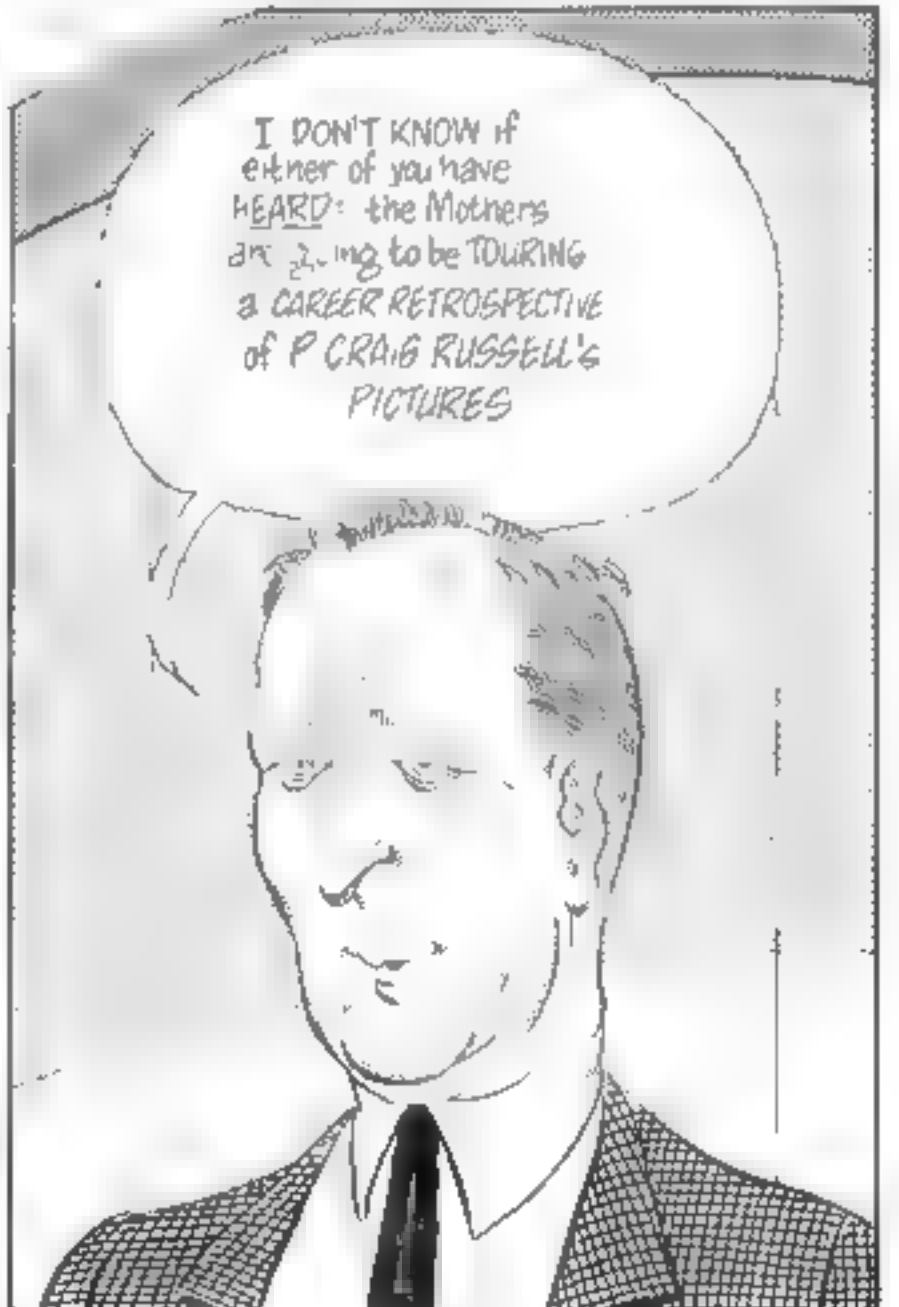
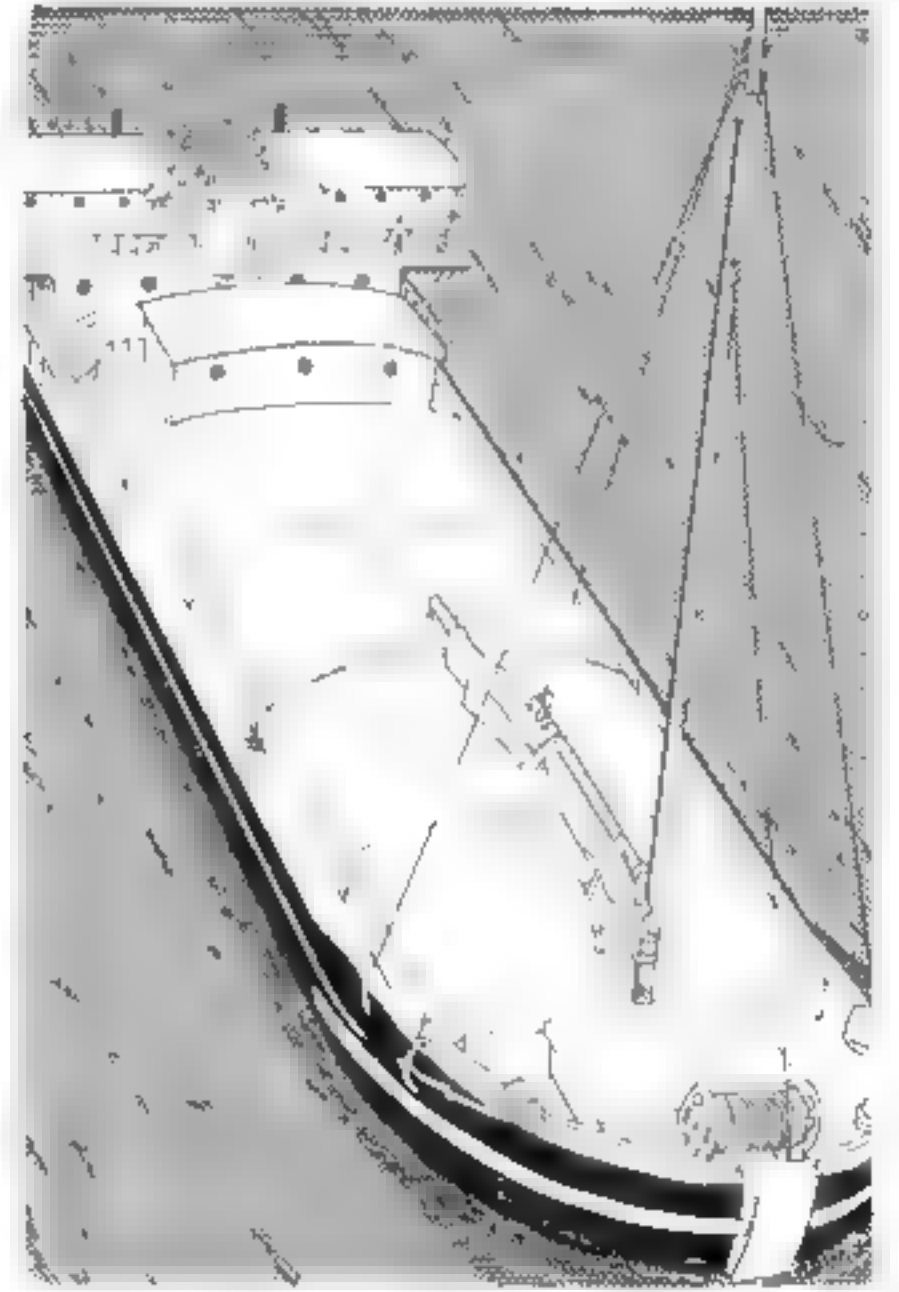
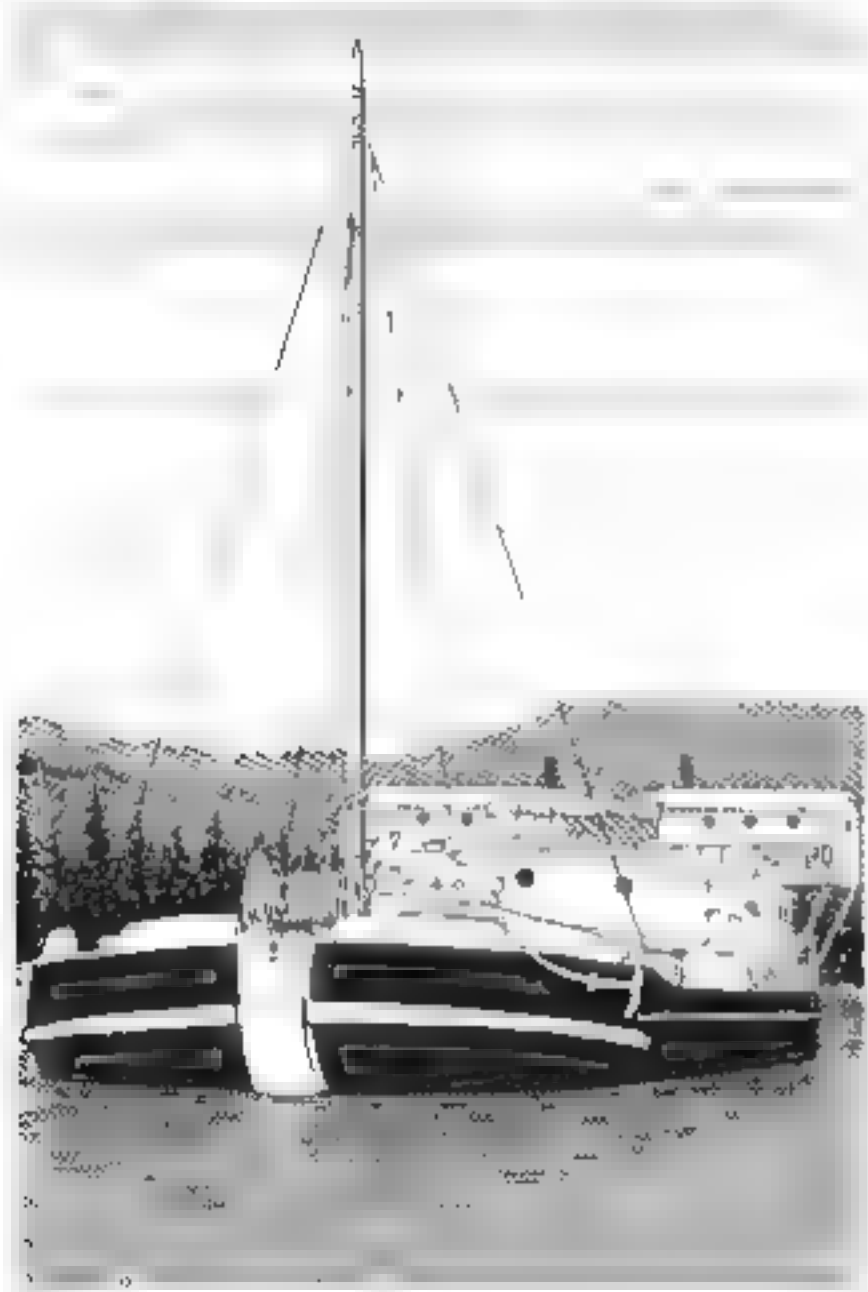














## PATCHING ANTHONY

JOZAN: Reserves of creative energy — braced for the onset of mature ambition. (*more specifically*) He's not as...entertaining...as Jozan would have expected — from all the stories Jozan had heard about him.

GINEVRA: No. No, he's not.

(*Silence, and then.*)

JOZAN: (*his peculiar face solidifying around the masculine insight*) Limited energy. Limited energy and limited *time*. A man can't live for very long after he has lost even a fraction of what your friend Diver has lost already.

GINEVRA: (*dispelling an inference*) My friend? Don't be silly. Jay Anthony Diver doesn't *have* friends. (*dispassionately*) He's probably over there right now, nursing his superiority. You know — creative mind over mere celebrity.

JOZAN: Then he's a self-deluding fool. Strip away his *romans à clef* — masquerading as creative works — and you'd find a quite ordinary fellow as envious of our privileged life as the most common tavern resident.

GINEVRA: (*still considering her own last observation*) I think that's right.

JOZAN: It's true. Everything he writes is just frustrated ambition, frustrated wish fulfillment. Take his most recent book —

GINEVRA: Let's have a drink.

JOZAN: (*suddenly thirsty*) Aye. Let's.

WELL I GUESS  
I SHOWED  
HIM, HON

2

21

SHOCKED  
I CALLED  
HIM  
FRANCIS!

?

AYE BUT

WE  
HATES  
BEING CALLED  
FRANCIS

AYE... BUT  
CEREBUS THOUGHT  
WE WEREN'T

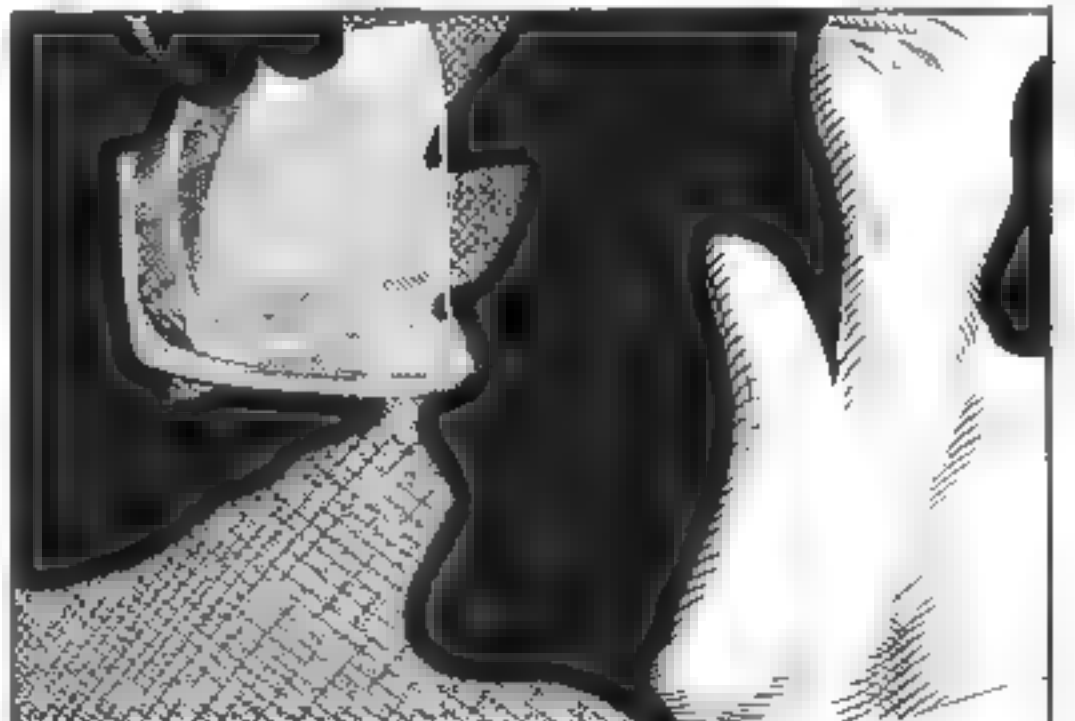
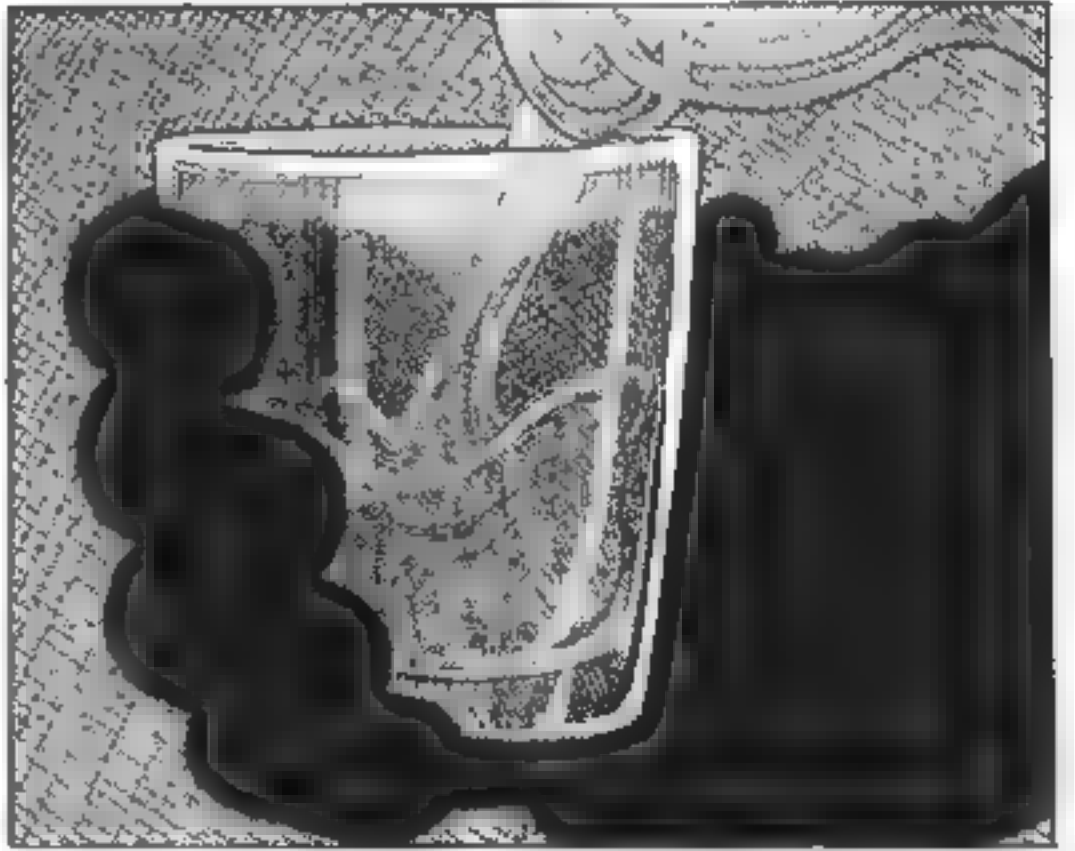
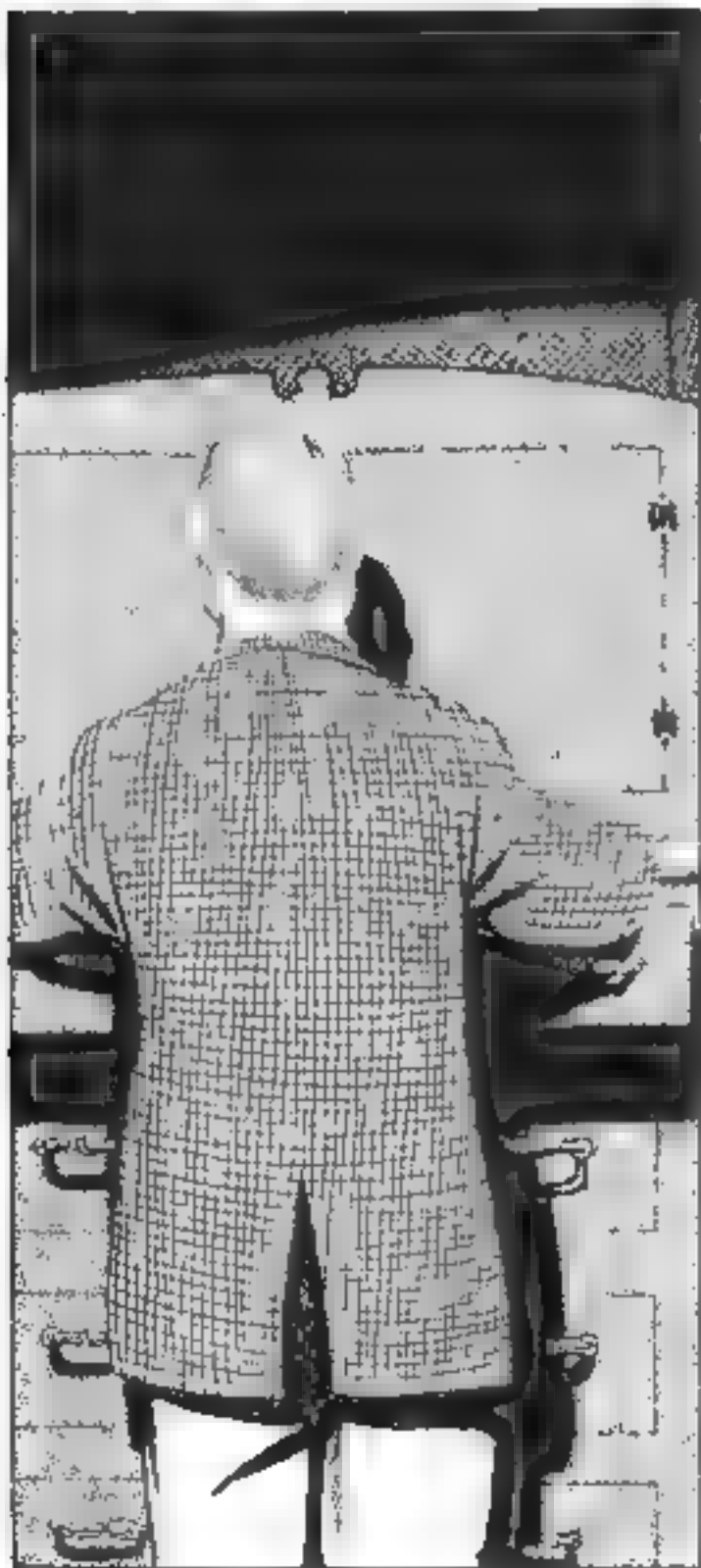
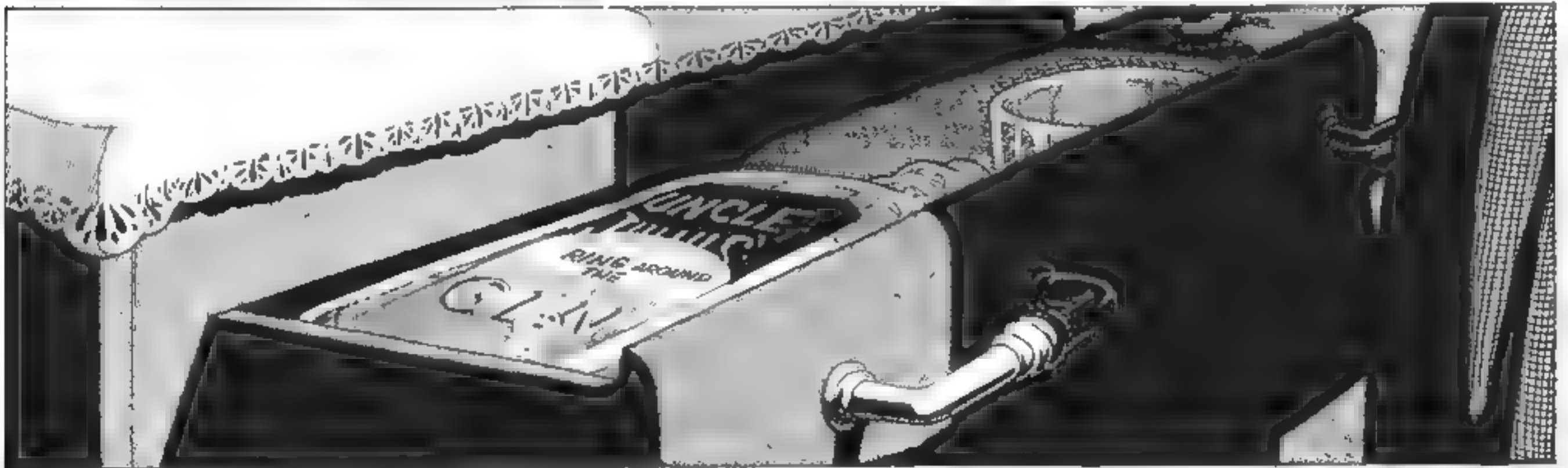
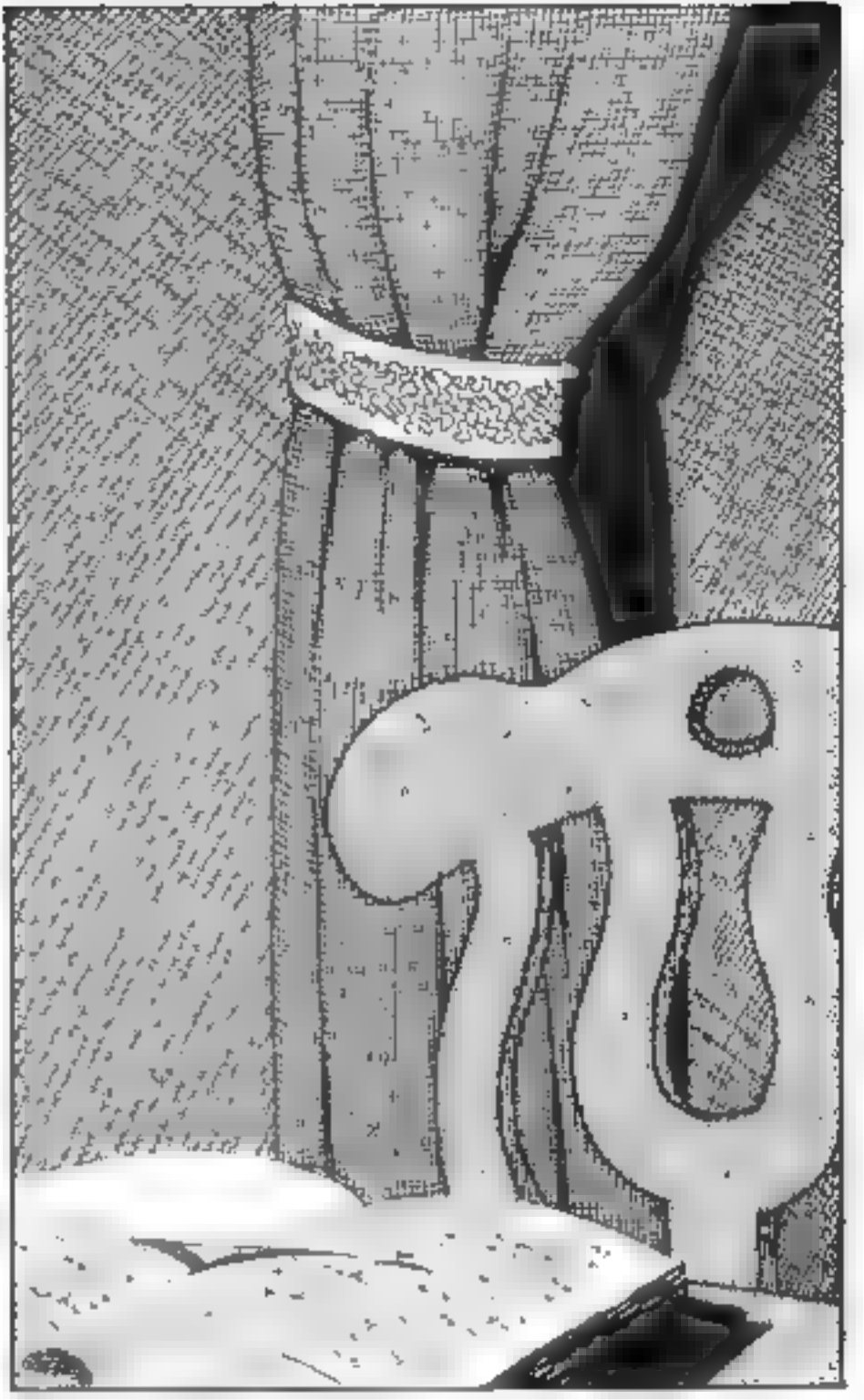
WE JUST  
HATES  
IT

AYE... BUT CEREBUS  
THOUGHT WE WEREN'T  
GOING TO TALK TO HIM  
AT ALL.

YOU  
SAID...

AND  
I THOUGHT WE  
AGREED WE WEREN'T  
GOING TO FIGHT  
ANY MORE

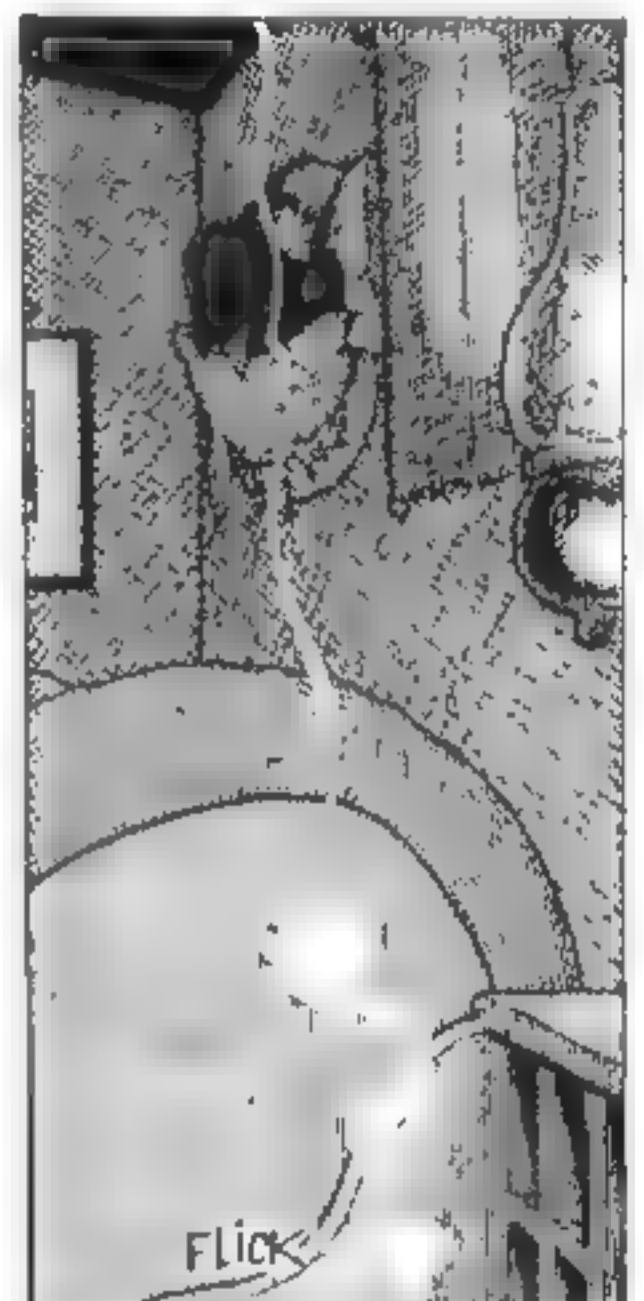






They would  
have liked to have  
been her, but  
not to have paid  
the price in  
self control.

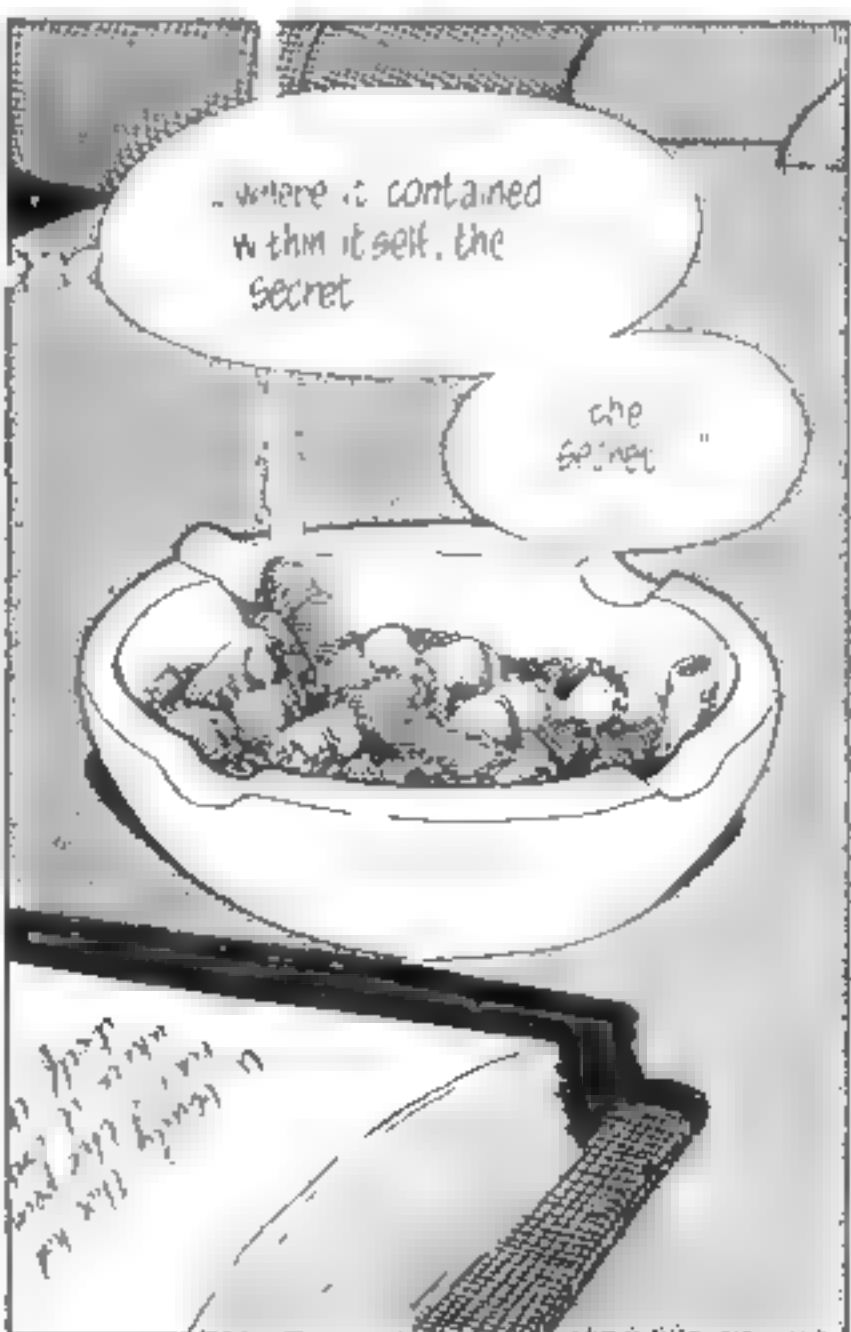
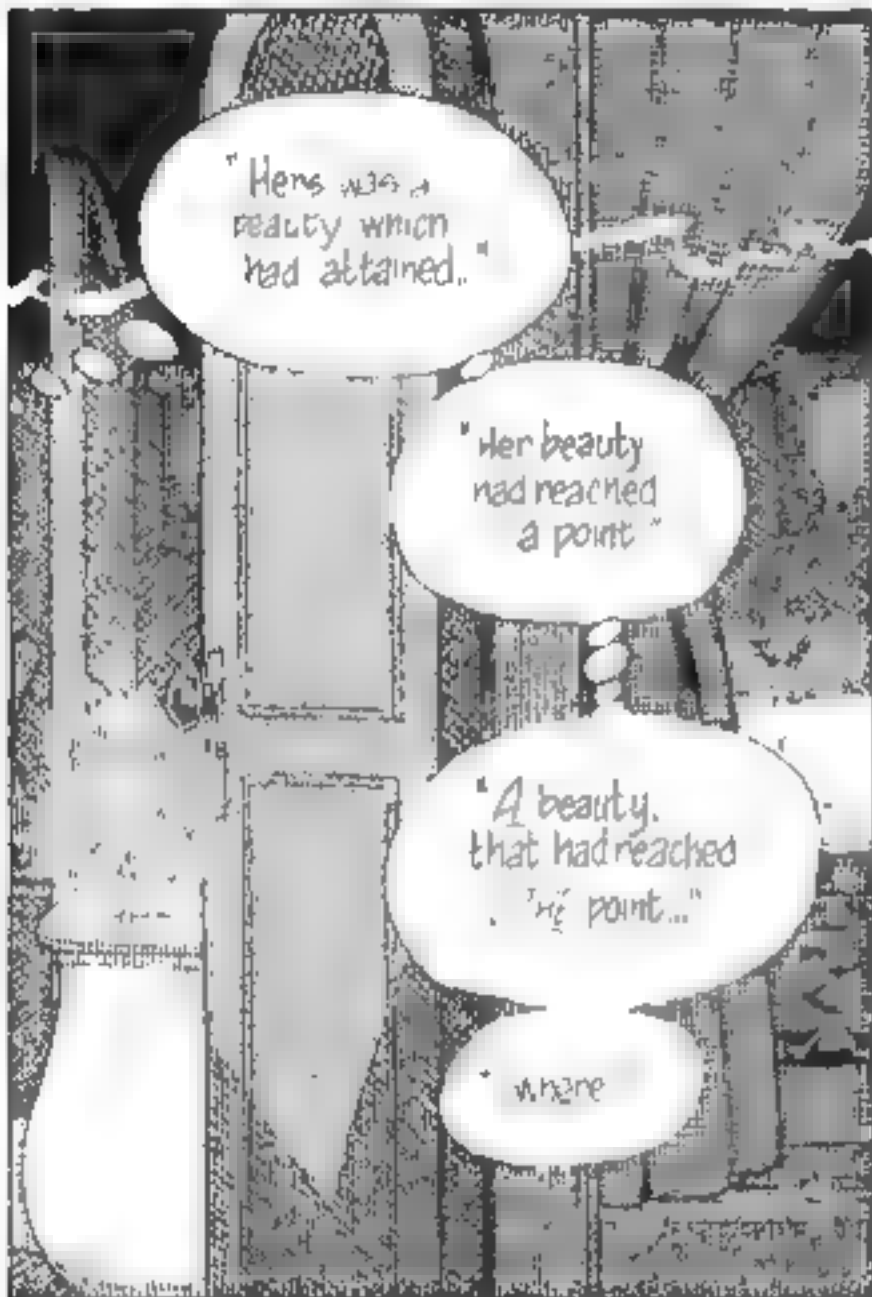
*Sketch sketch sketch sketch Sketch*



Listen, little Aisha:  
Draw your chair up  
close to the edge of the  
precipice and I'll tell  
you a story.

*Sketch sketch sketch sketch*



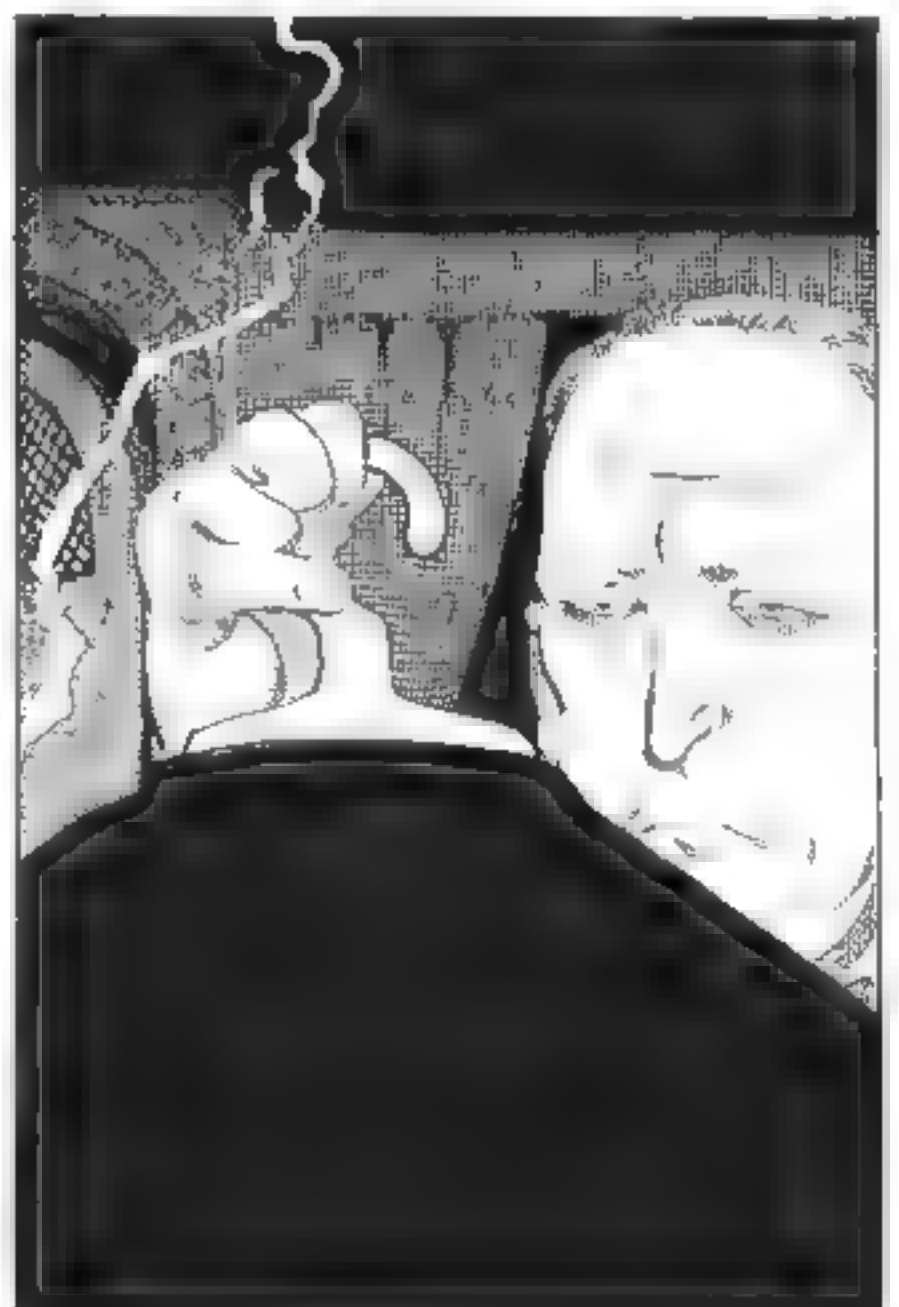
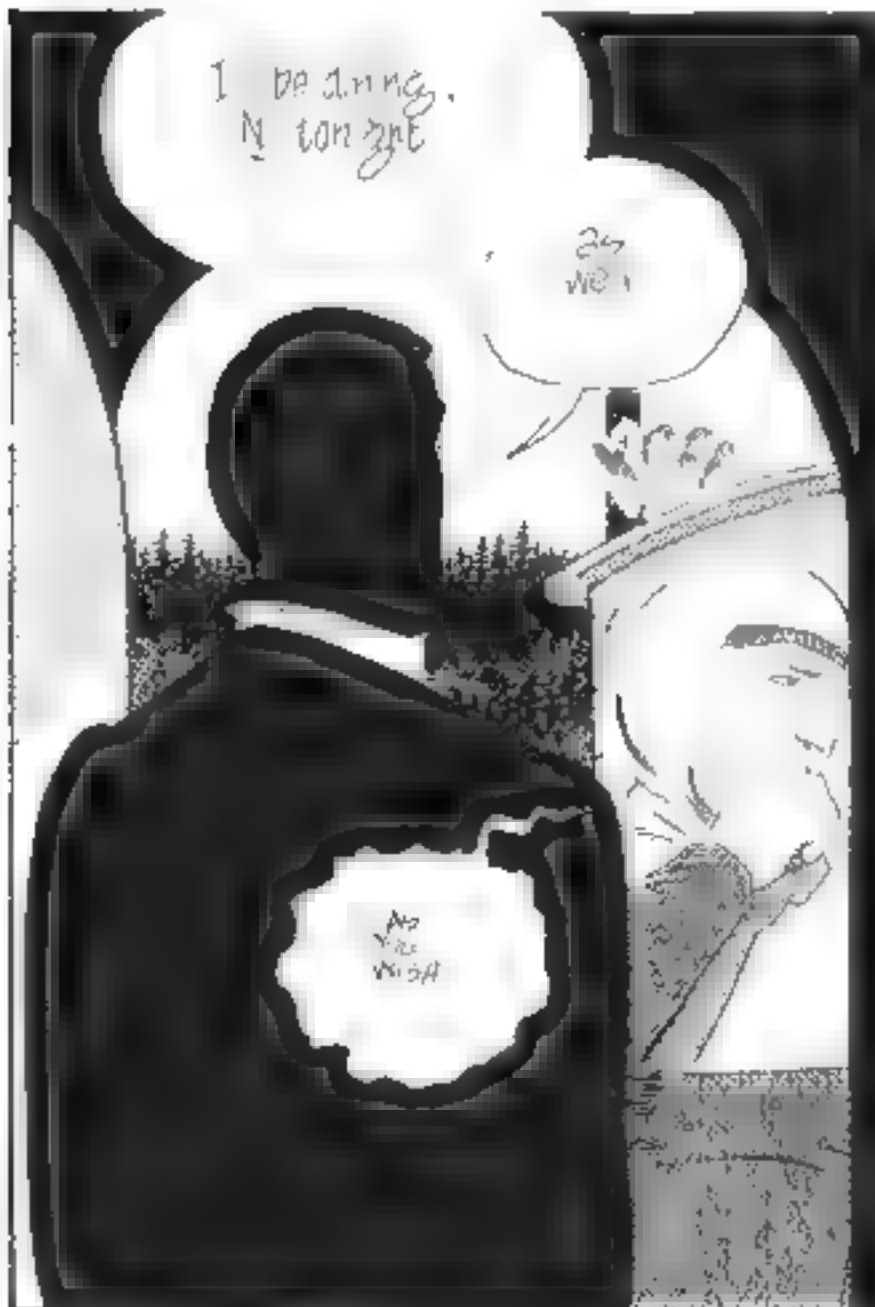
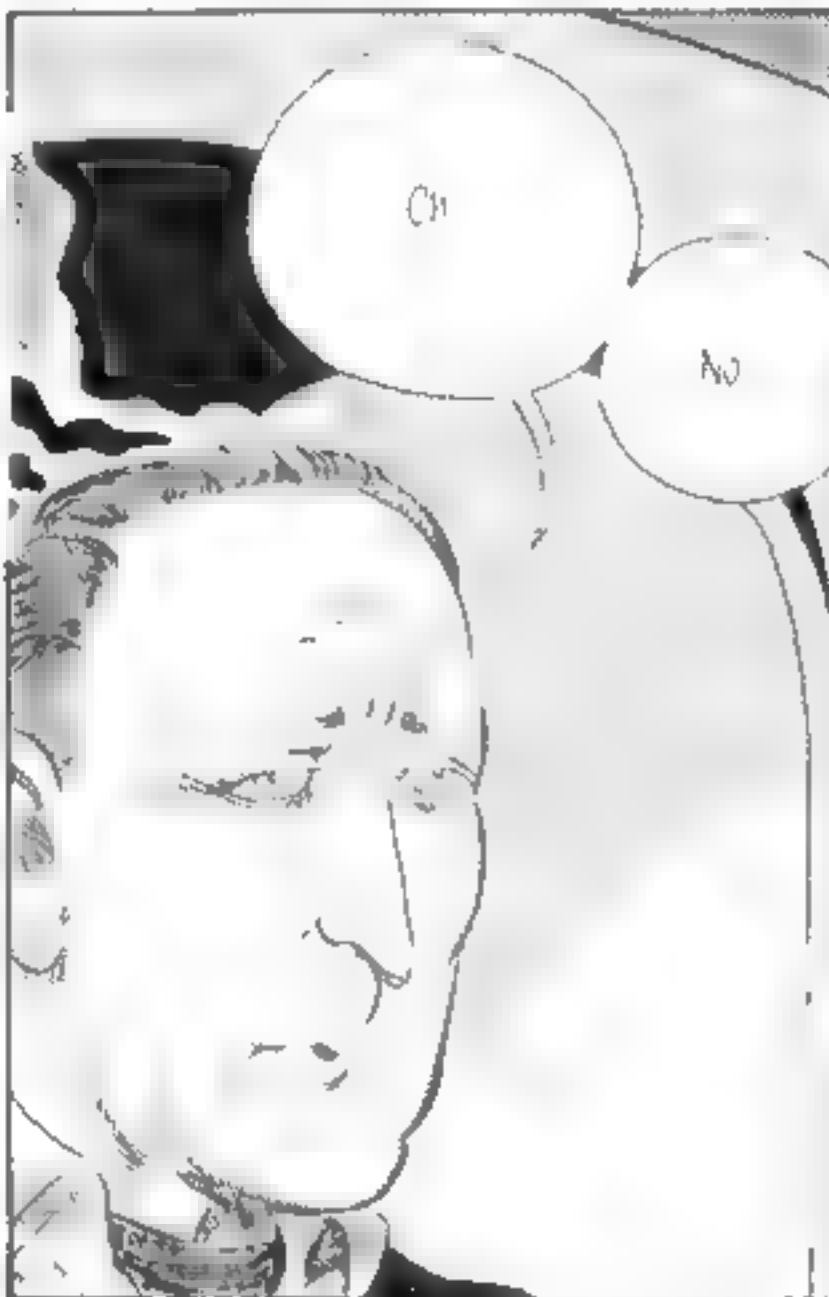


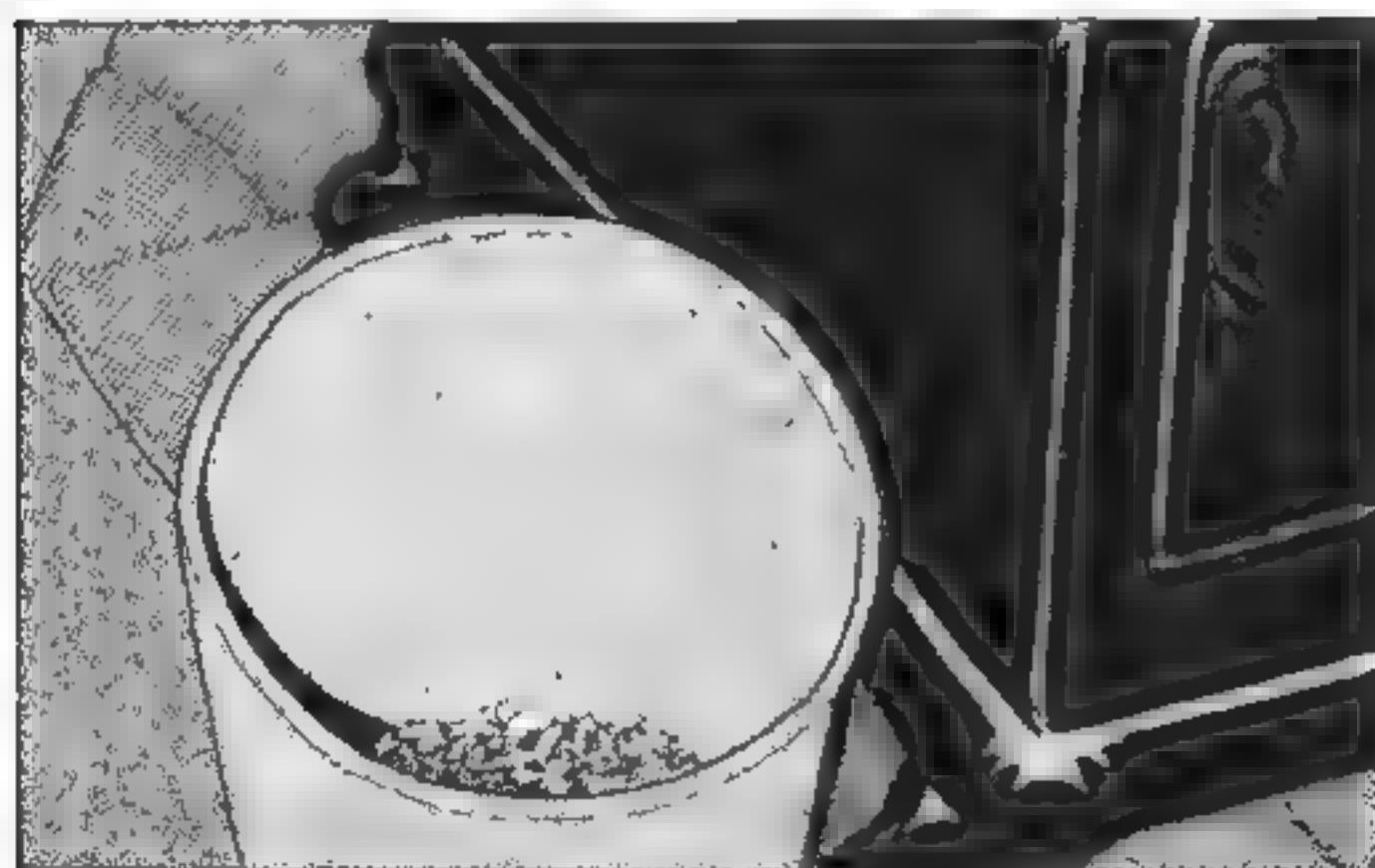
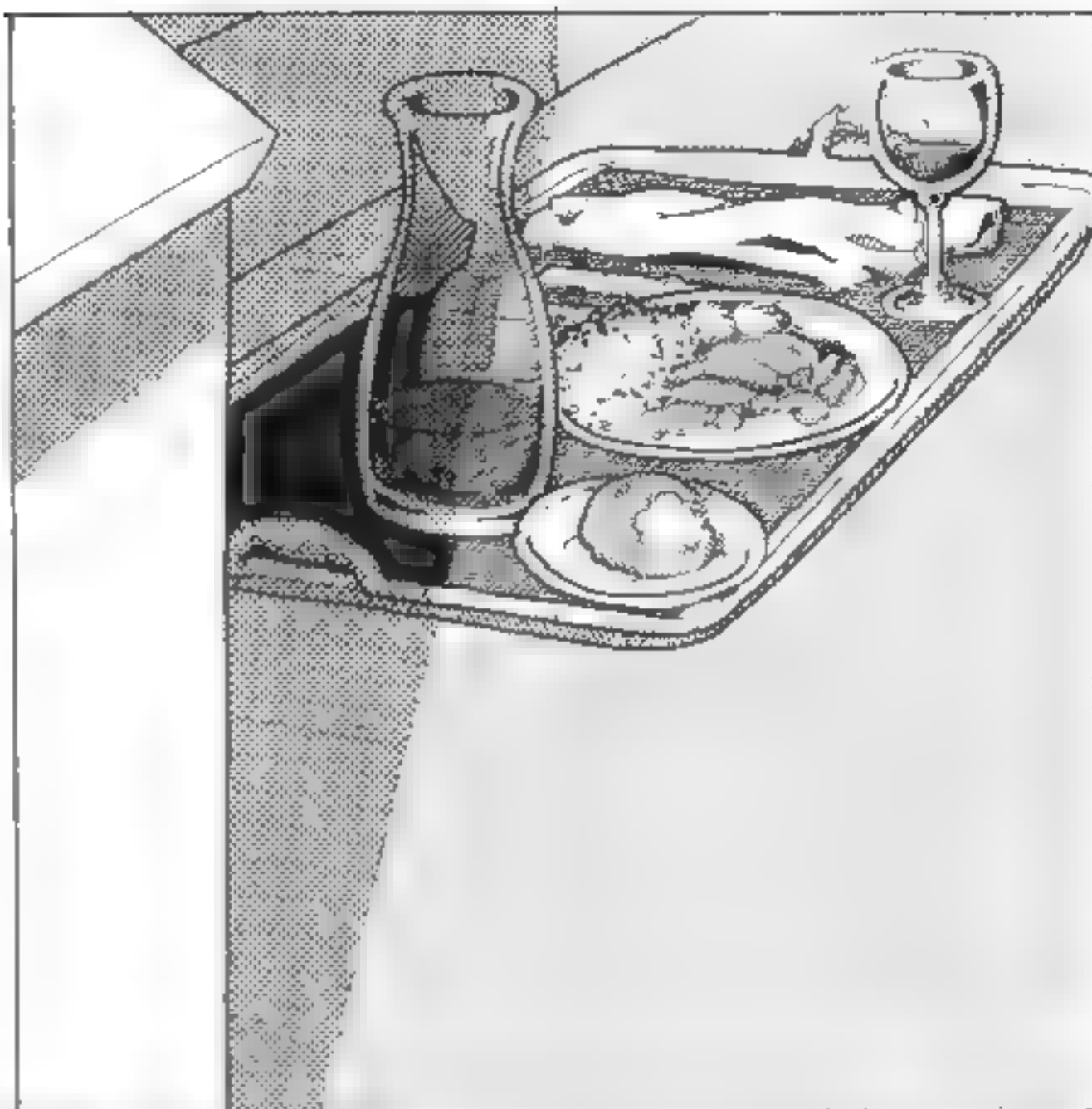
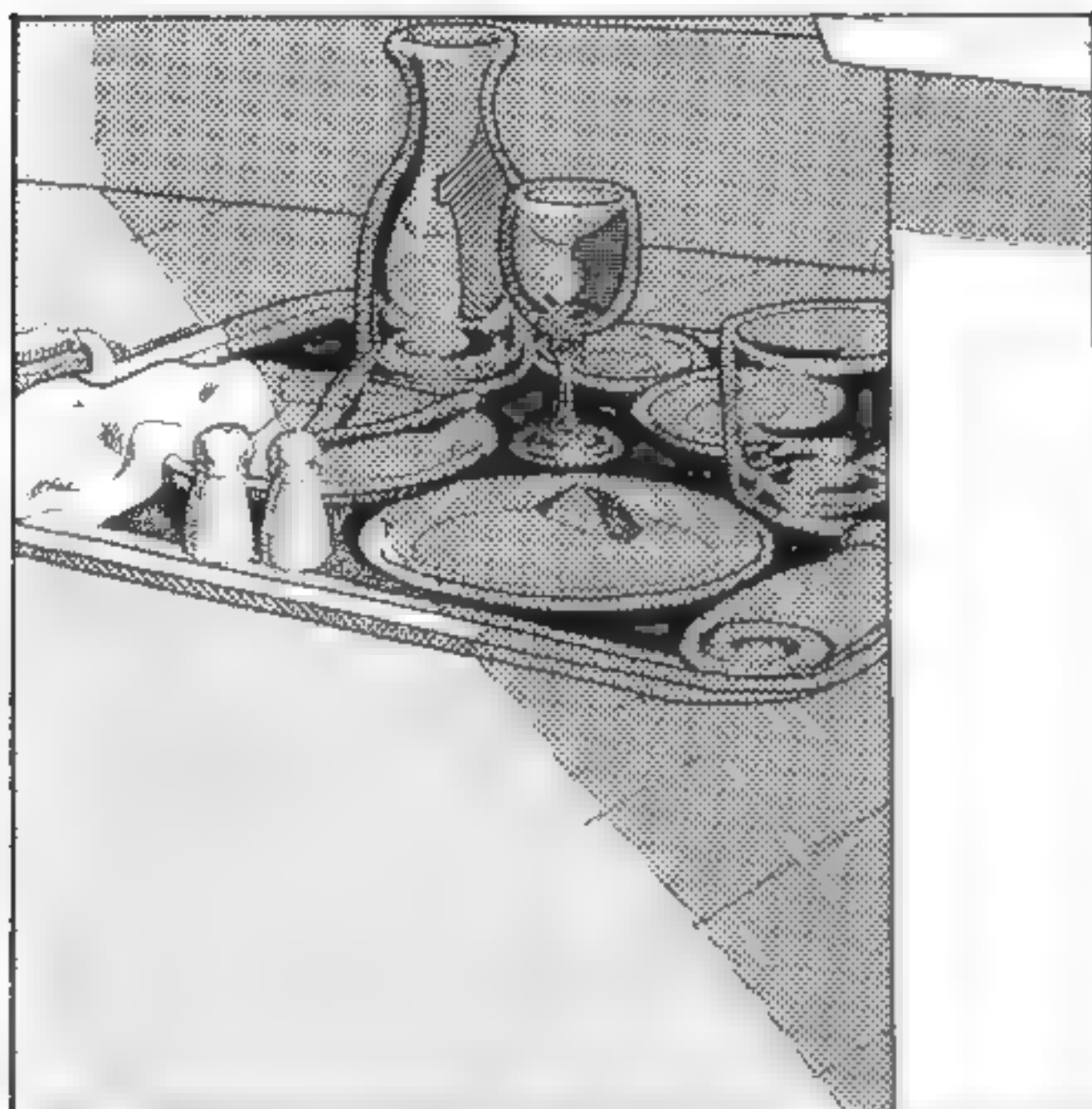
A beauty that had reached the point where it contained within itself the secret of its own growth, as if it would go on increasing forever.

**KNOCK**

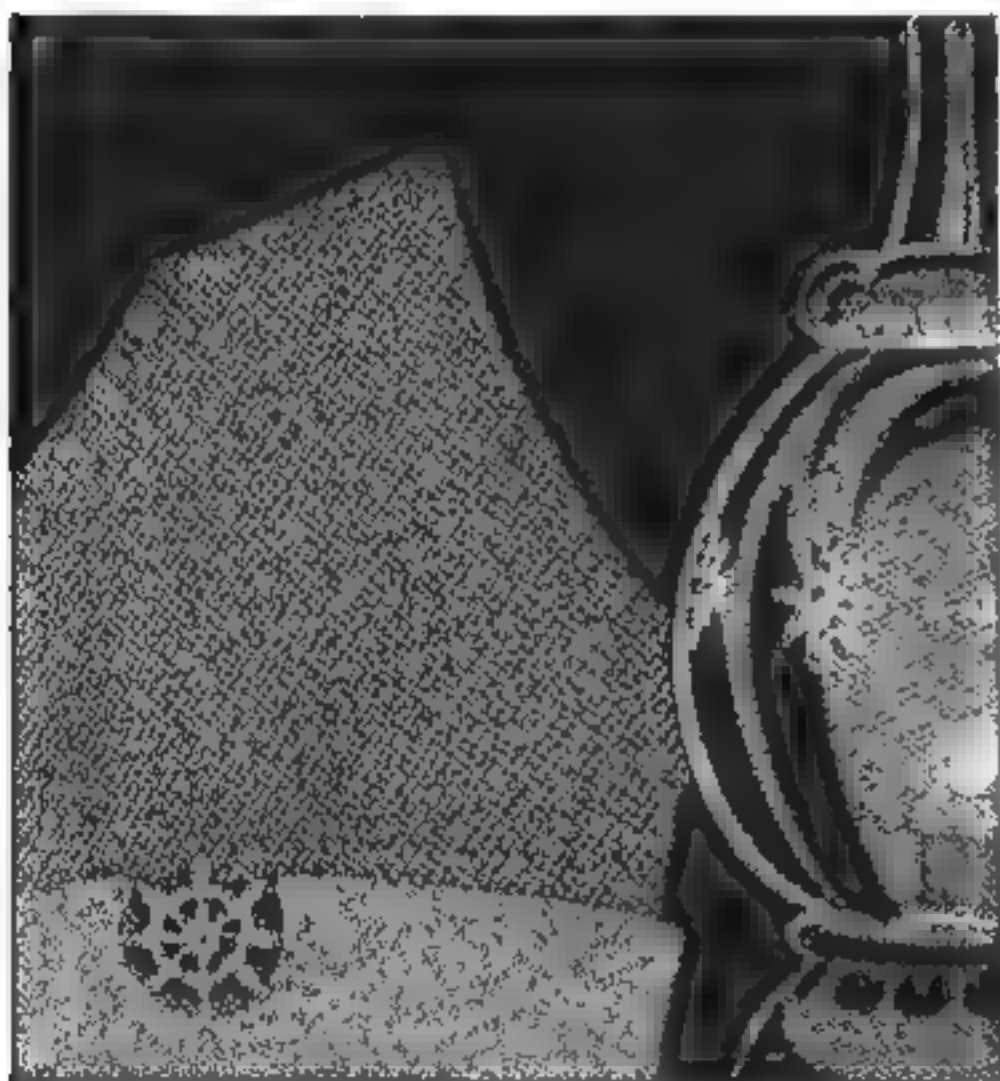
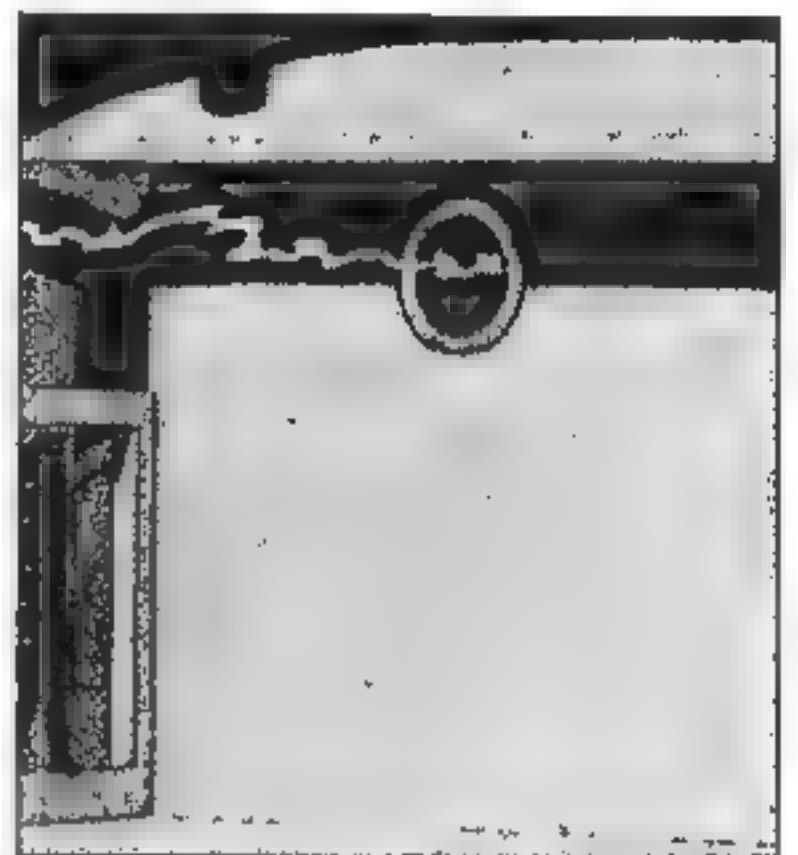
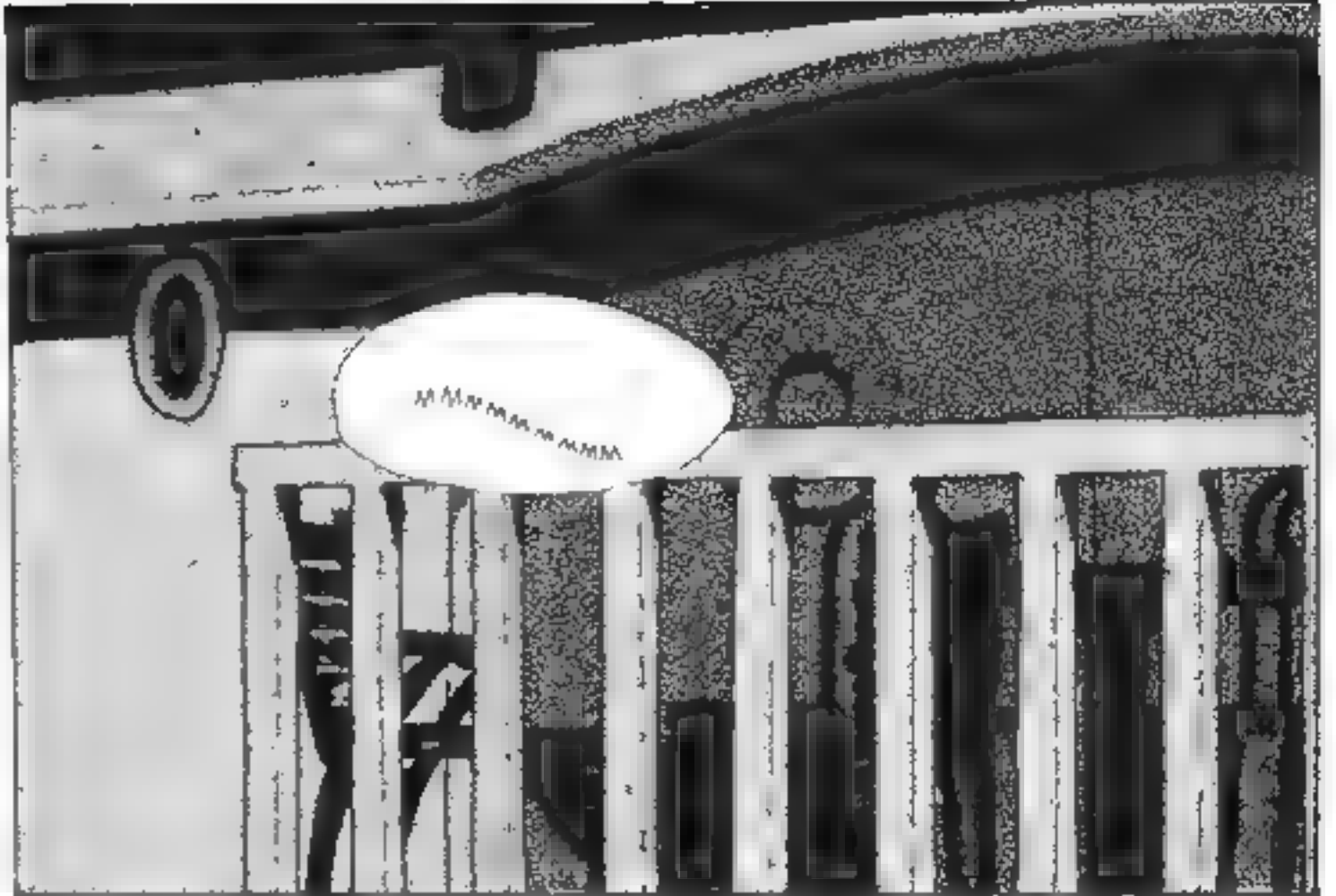






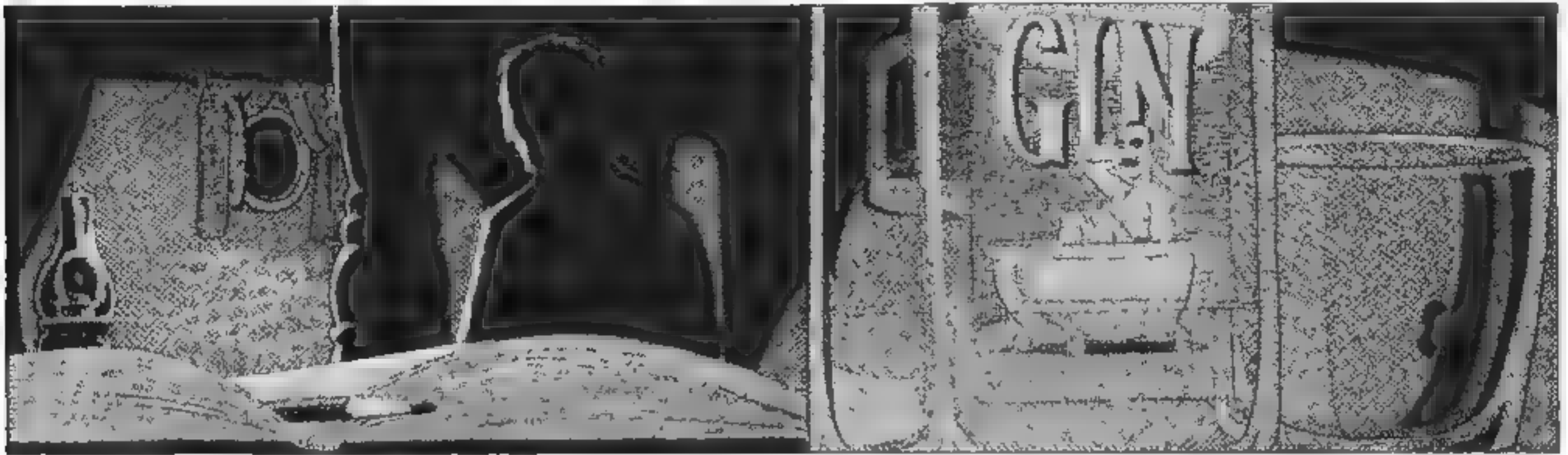


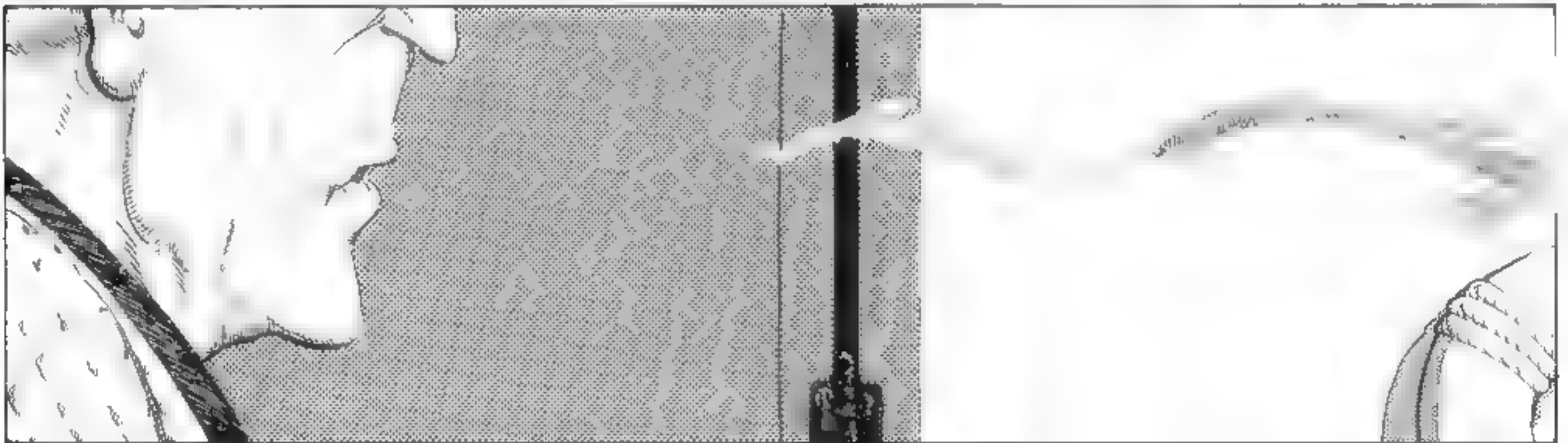
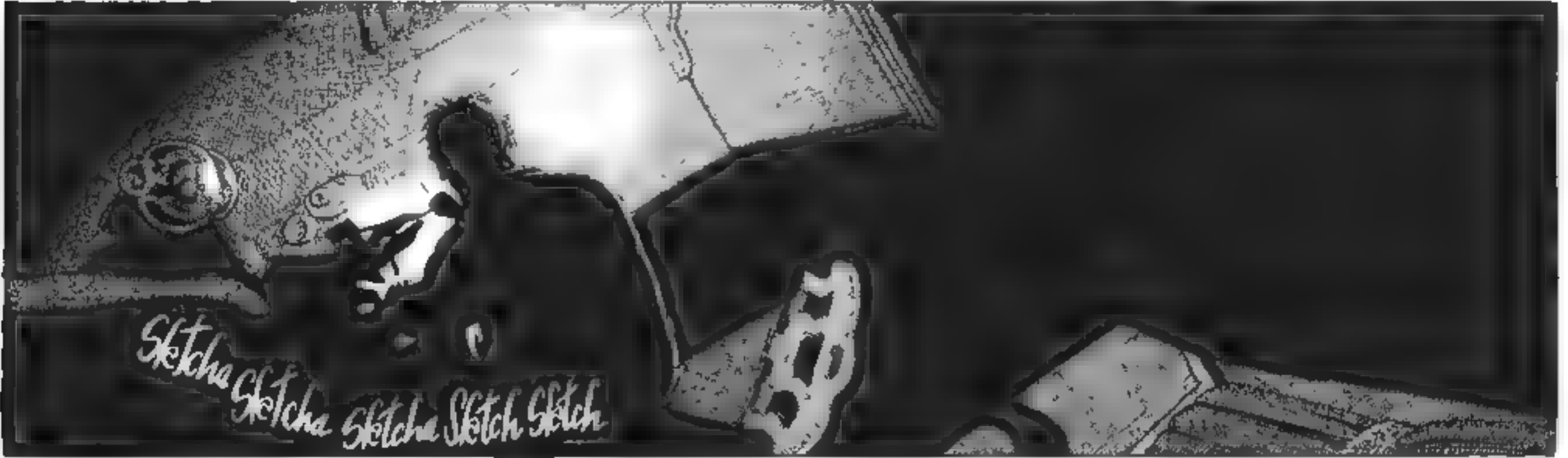
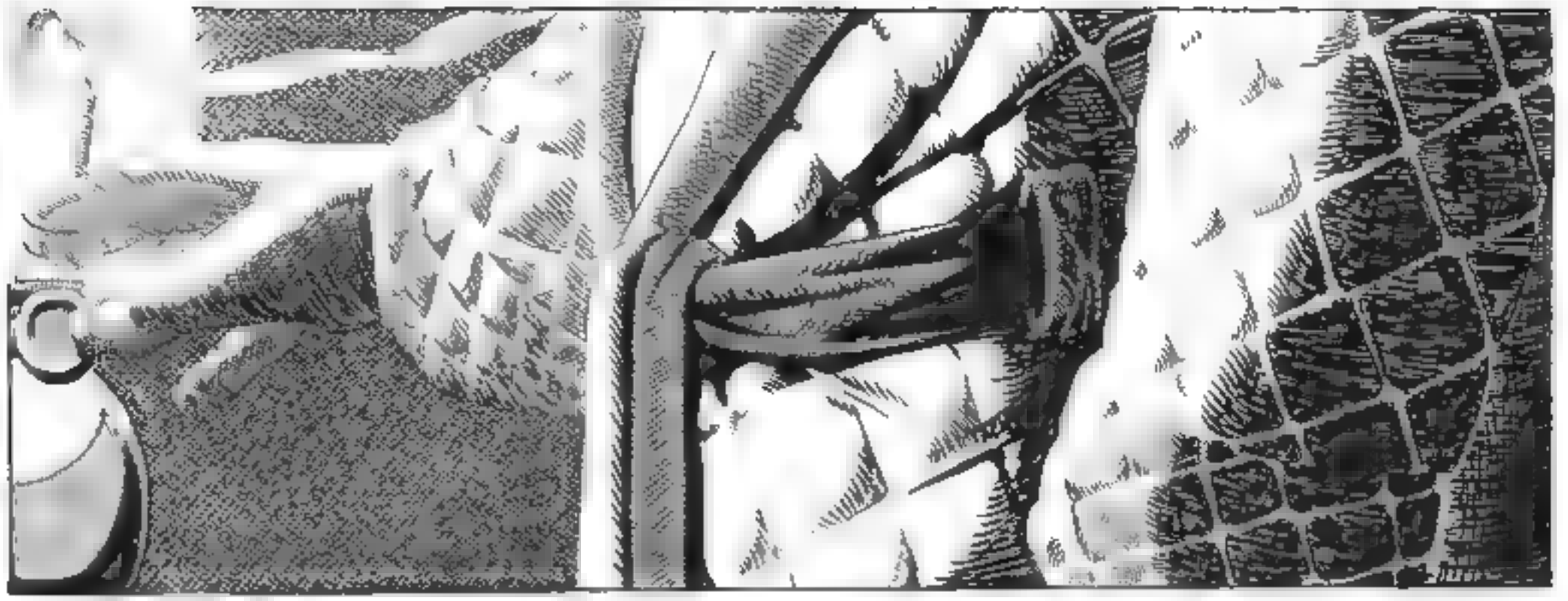




It is in our  
thirties that we want  
friends. In our forties we  
know they won't save  
us any more than  
love did.

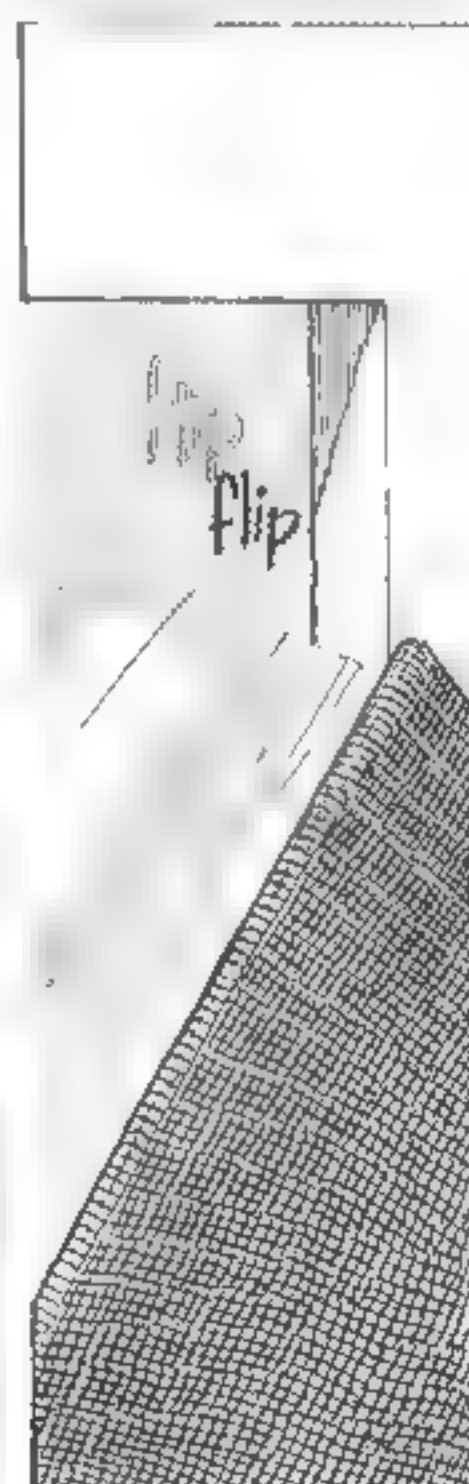






Our father died. Suddenly in the  
night they died and in the morning  
we knew.







The kiss originated when the first male reptile asked the first female reptile, implying, in a subtle, complimentary way that she was as succulent as the small reptile he had had for dinner the night before."

You could tell the Hawthorne boys by the r table manners. They ate with the servants while their parents dined and remarried."

Umph

HA  
HA  
HA  
HA

HA  
HA  
HA  
HA

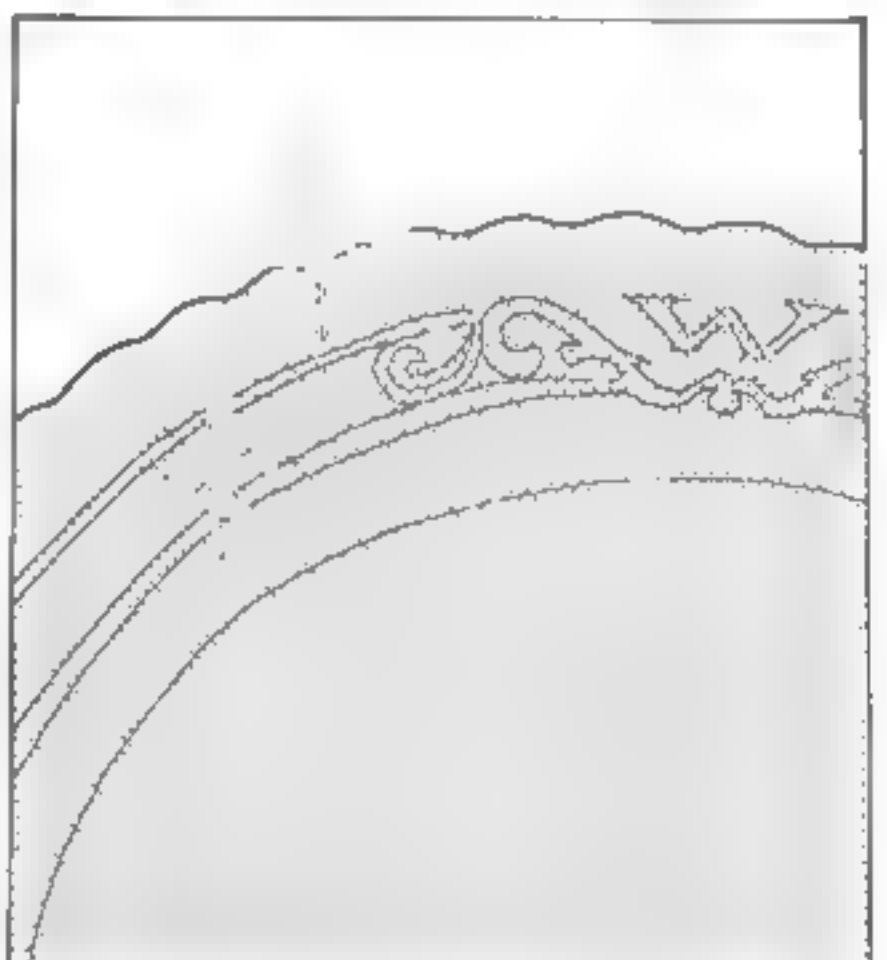
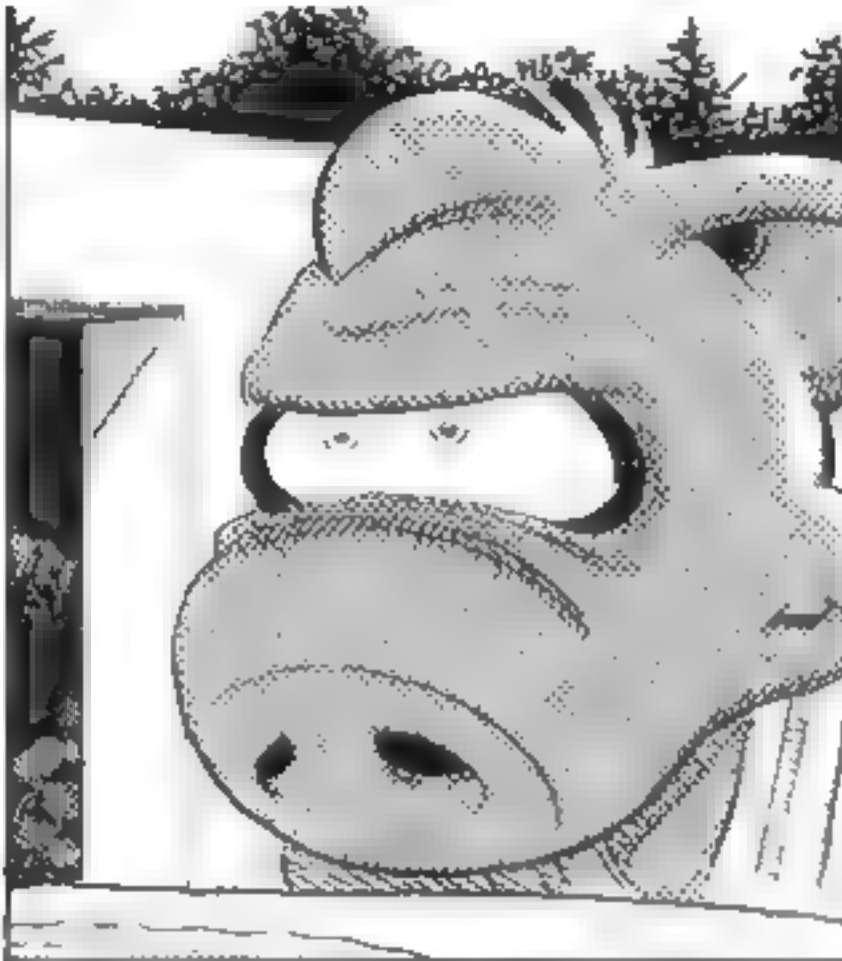
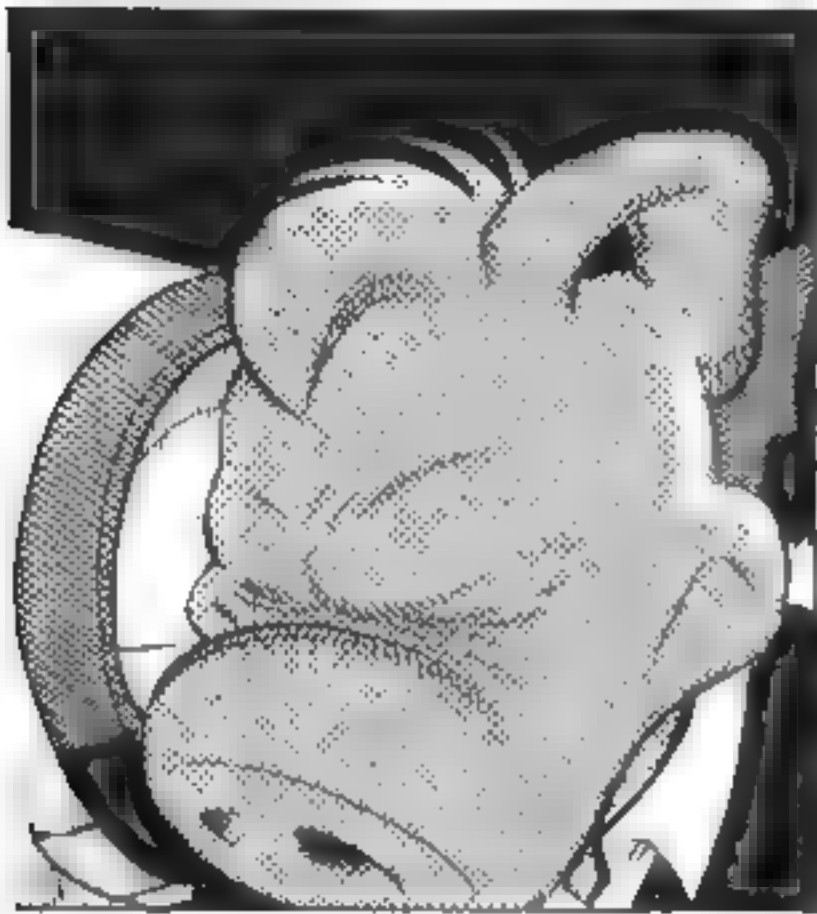
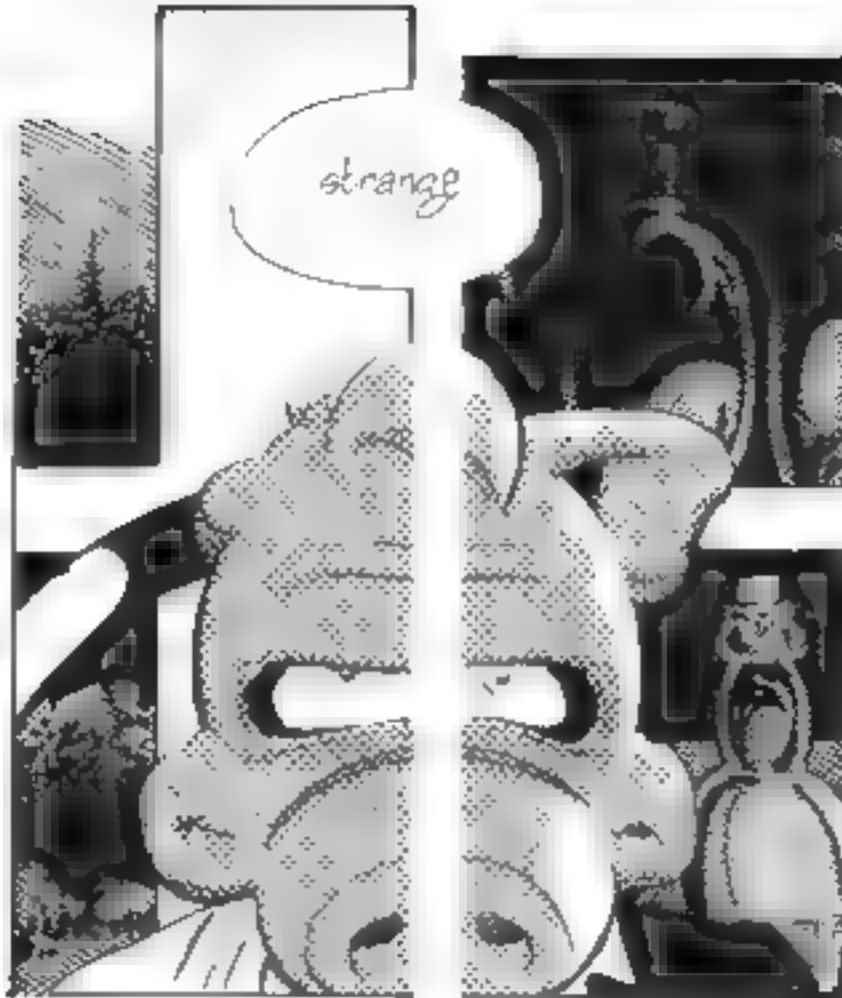
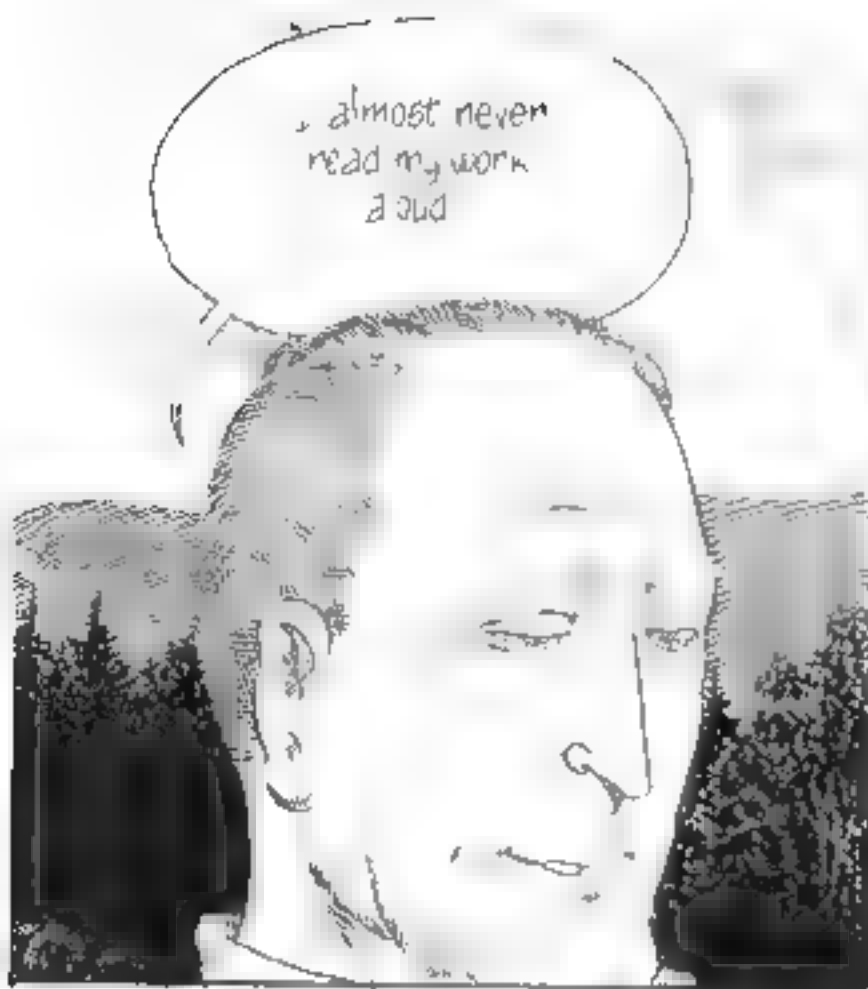
It am... it's a little something if you've never noticed, but the Hawthorne boys to live with one of the Hawthorne boys

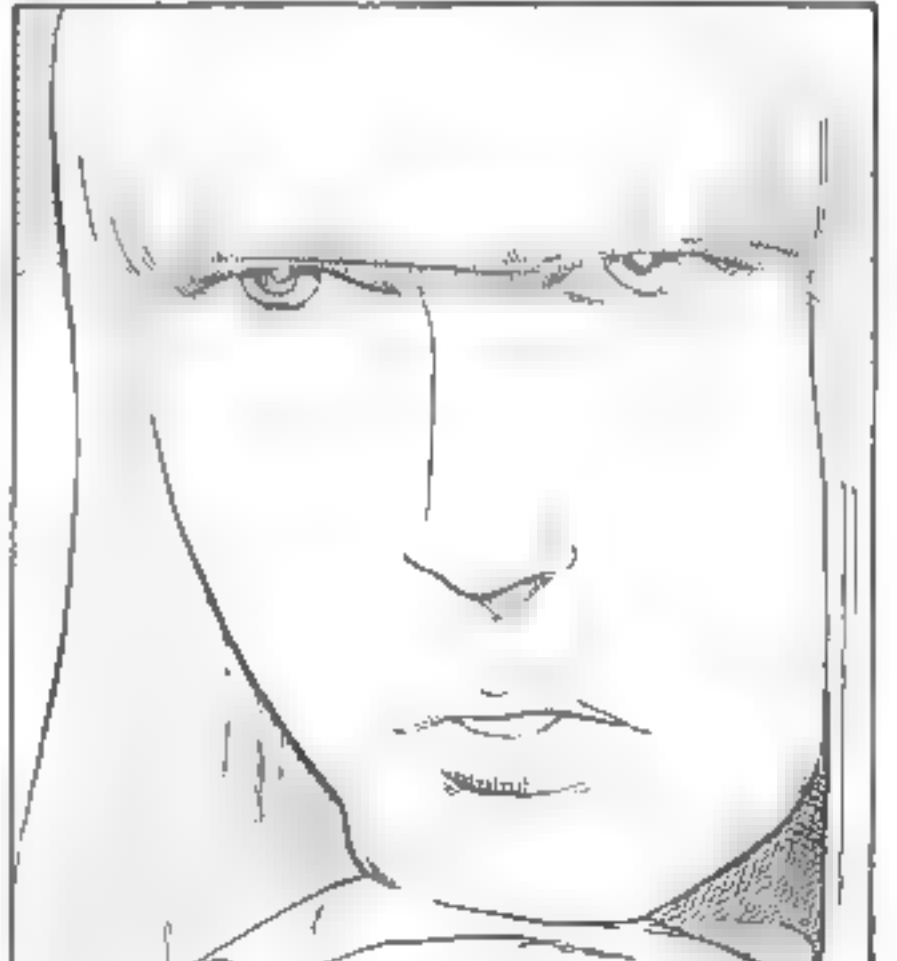
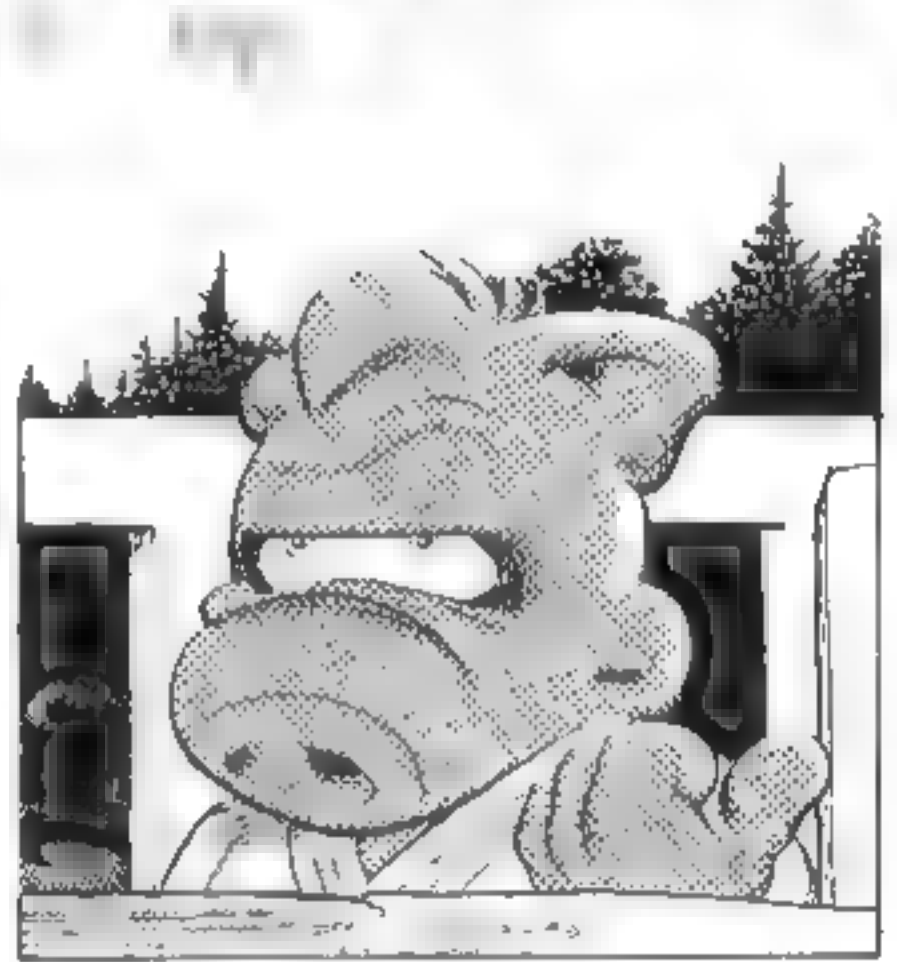
OH!

SNORT  
SNORT

HEH HEH

AYE.







the beautifully crafted china plates, the glittering utensils, capturing the sunlight just so. To whom had they belonged? How long ago? And how had they been wrested from them?

### COCKTAIL HOUR

"The problem," Jay Anthony Diver found himself saying, "is that youthfulness is worn away through daily intimacy with another individual. The aging process accelerates through the perilous business of endeavouring to maintain analagous moods." The intricacy of the thought bypassed his listeners, so he reconfigured his argument. "It has much in common with a dance. Whoever is 'leading' in a given moment makes a 'follower' of the other. Once the husband or wife has been 'led' into a mood — be it morose or joyful — they both feel obligated to maintain it. At which point it lacks the sincerity of a genuine mood and becomes, instead, a portrayal which, by definition, is always false."

"Ginevra and Jozan aren't married," said Jozan, his third-person forensics assisting the advance of intelligent discourse in much the same way that a broken ankle benefits a ballerina.

"How *is* your wife Xena?" asked Ginevra by way of "leading" Jay Anthony, enticing him to "follow" her into proximities of her own mood, made rueful and introspective by his observation.

Ah, yes. There it was — the muffled drumbeat resonance which echoed along the once glittering, now darkened and desolate corridors of his interior life in these latter days. Xena. Xena. How *is* Xena?

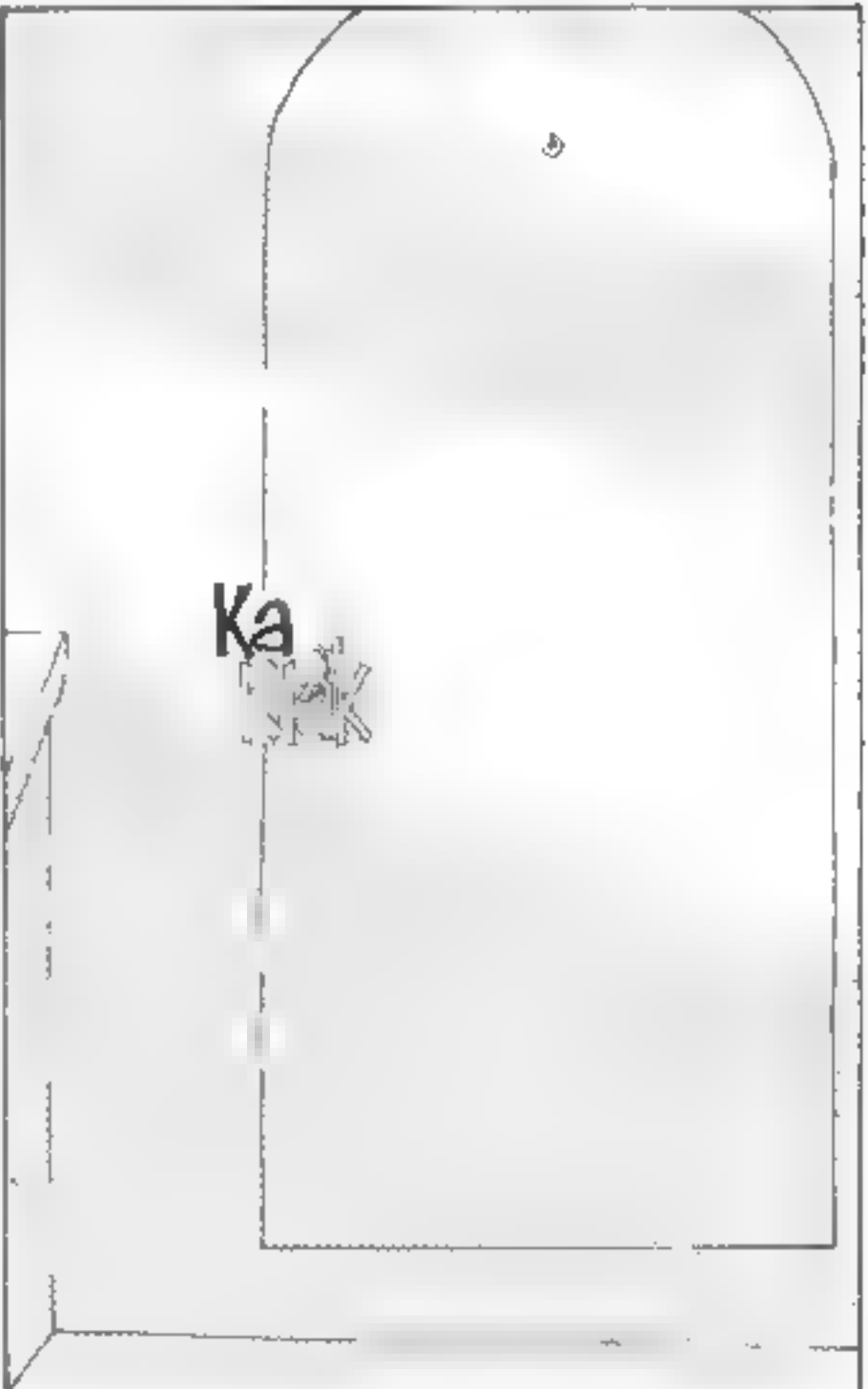
By way of emphasis a ray of fading sunlight broke through the clouds layered upon the horizon, illuminating Ginevra's head and shoulders, as if Nature herself now conspired to refute his argument and thus raise her mood above his own.

"She's always dead in your stories now, isn't she?" The setting sun intensified at the aristocratic skill which Genevra had brought to bear upon the statement — at the finesse with which she had stripped it of any interrogative quality while rendering it in the musical tones of a common pleasantry.

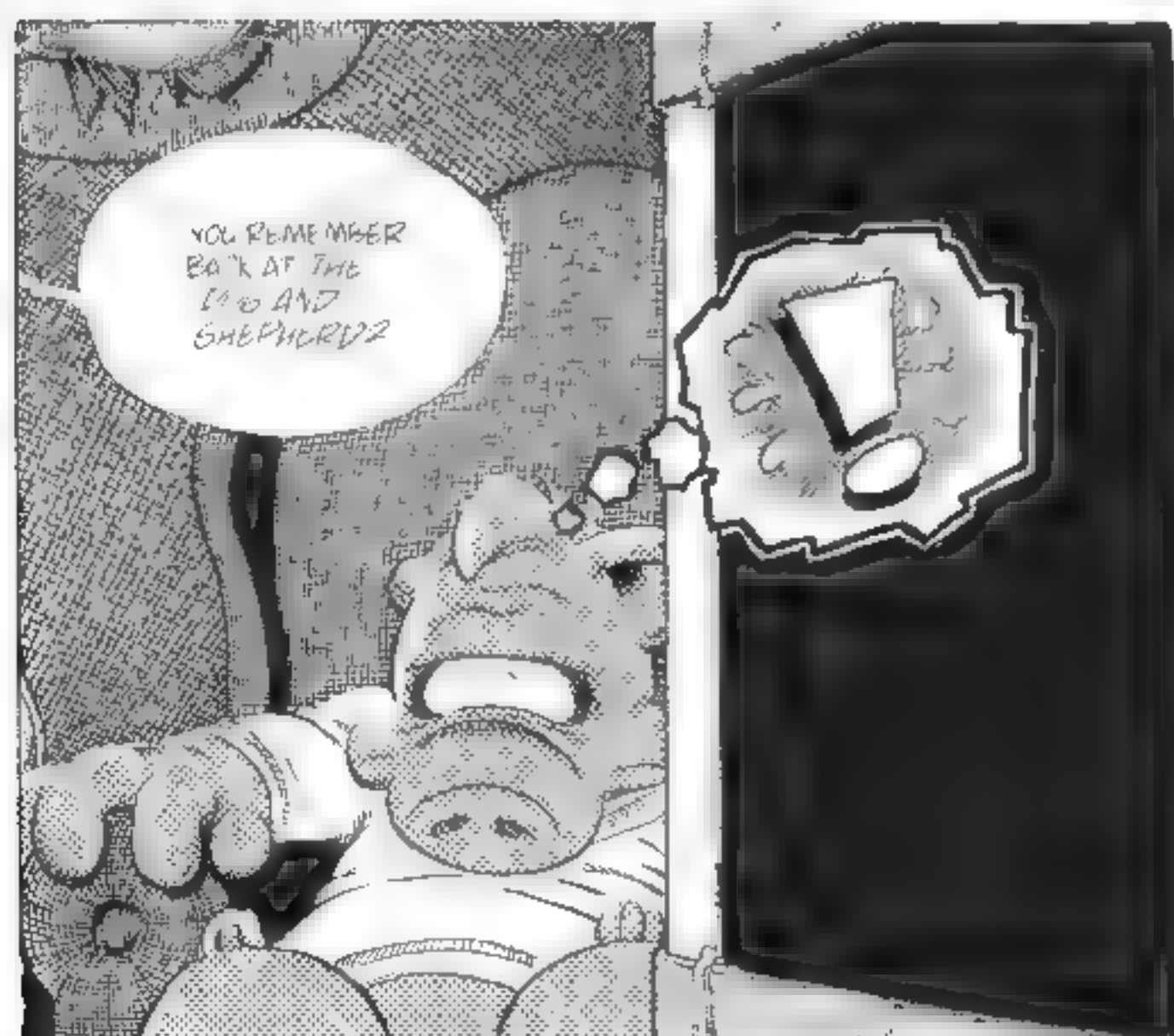
Mistress, now, of the moment, she smiled radiantly.

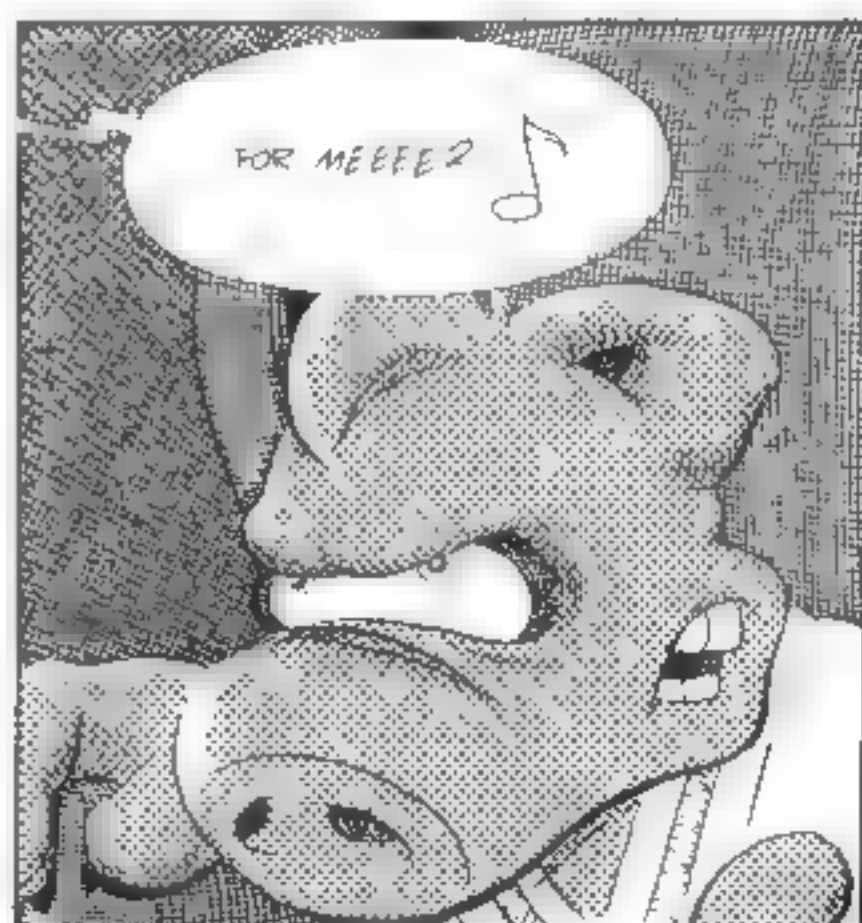
"I'm sorry. I mean the wives of your principal male characters, of course. They're always dead."

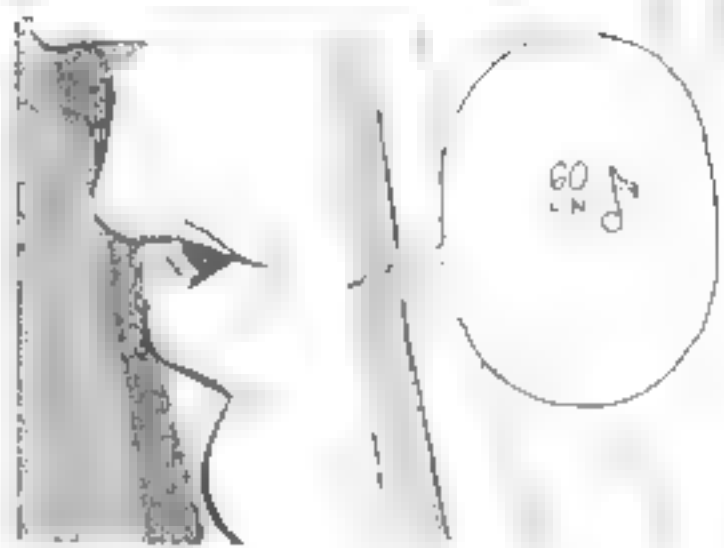
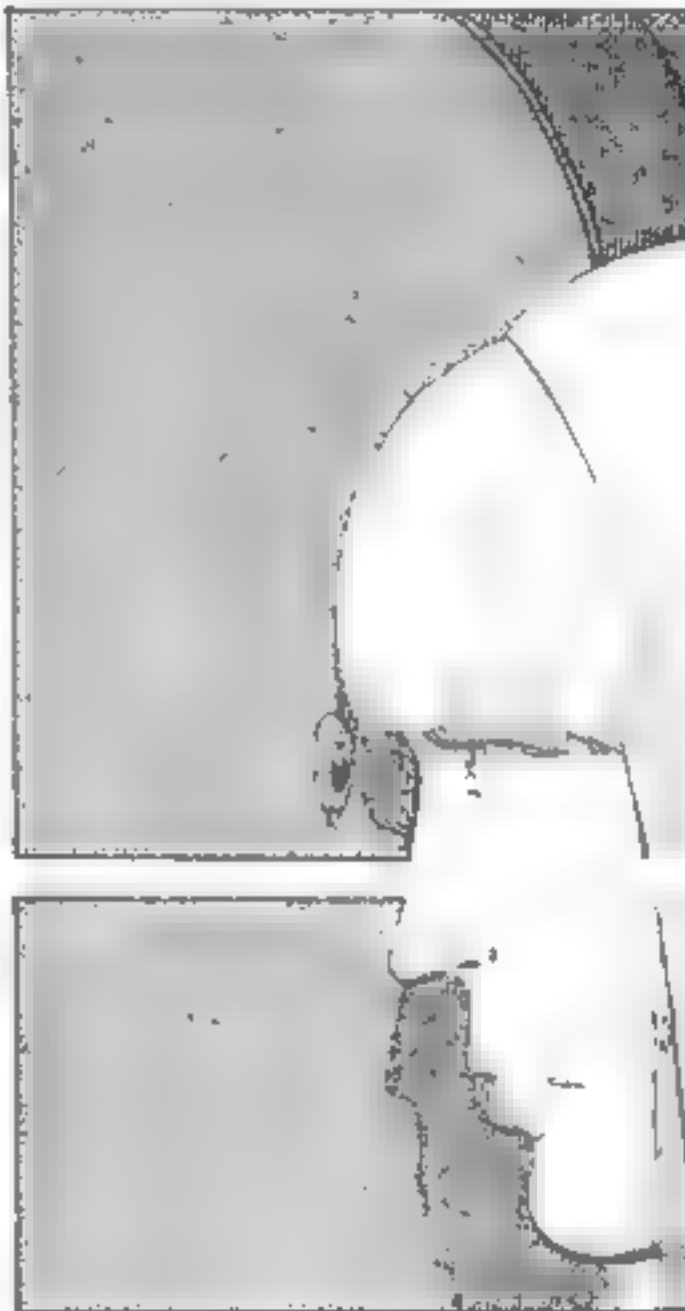
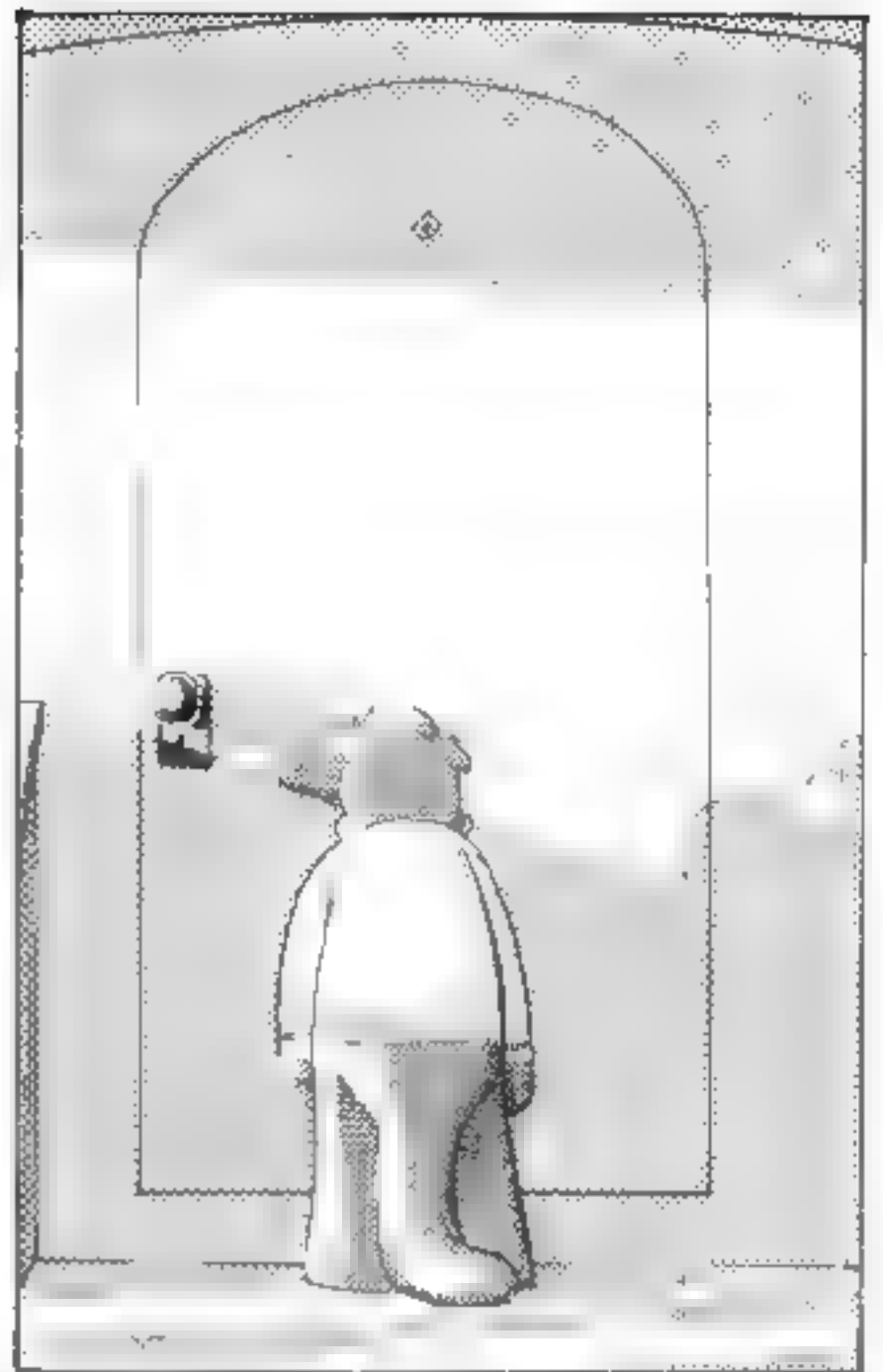
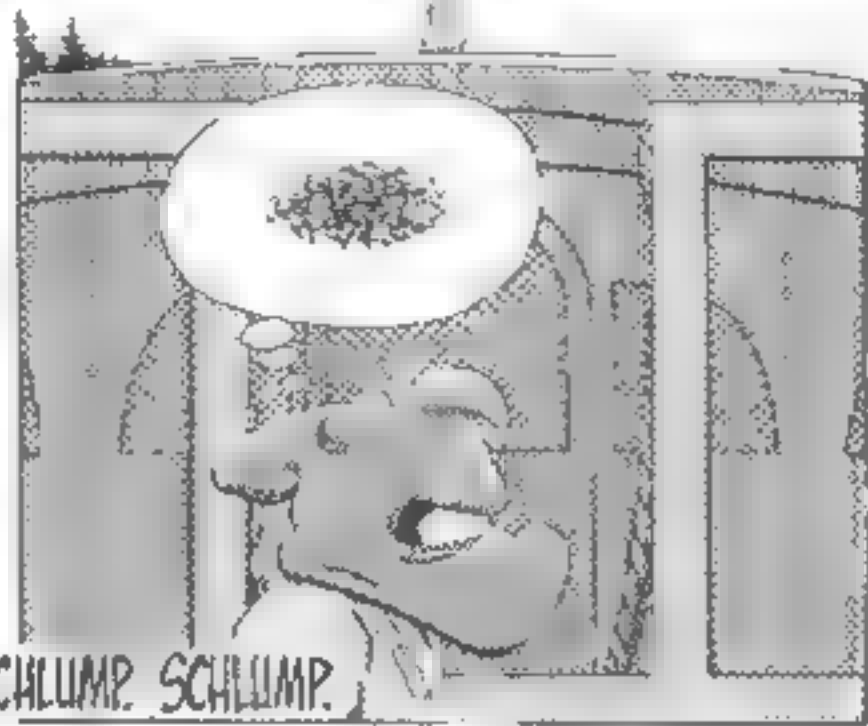
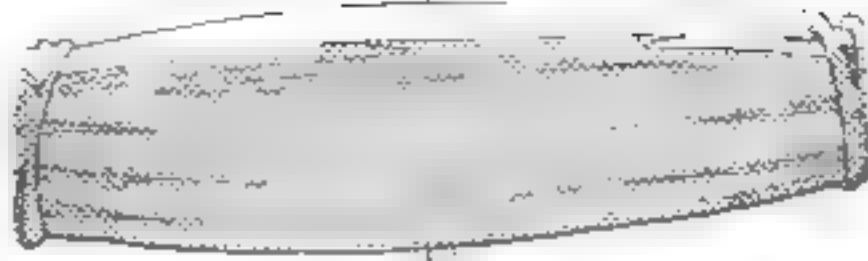








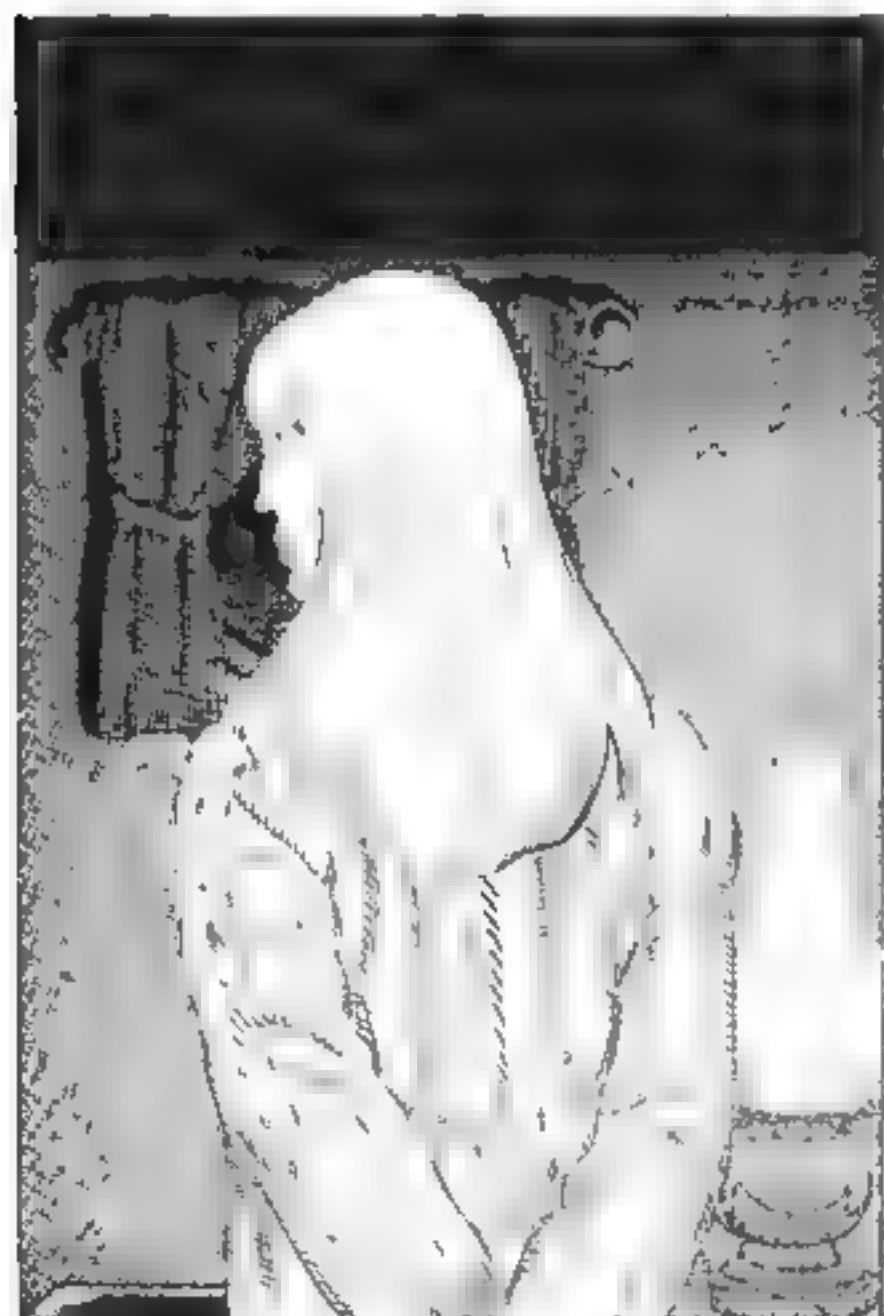
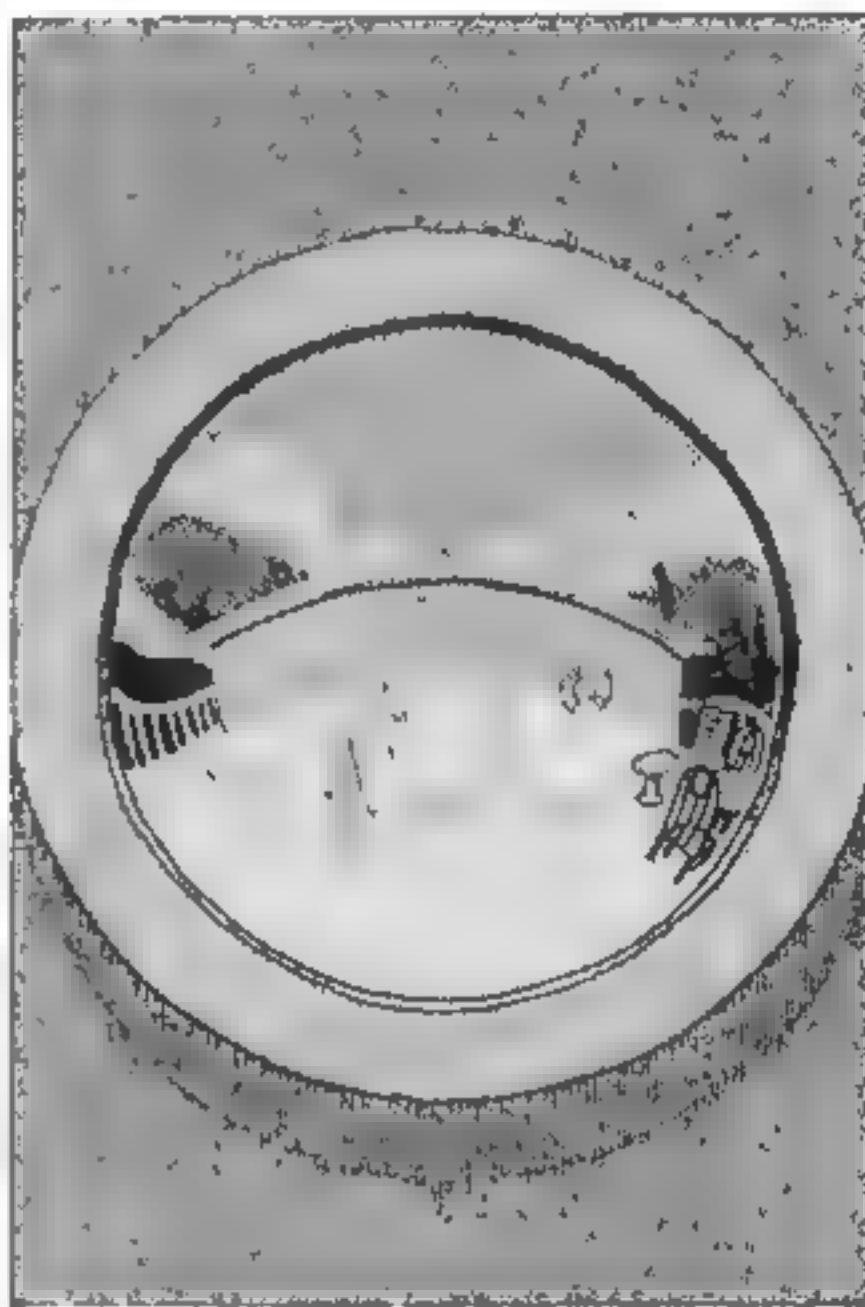
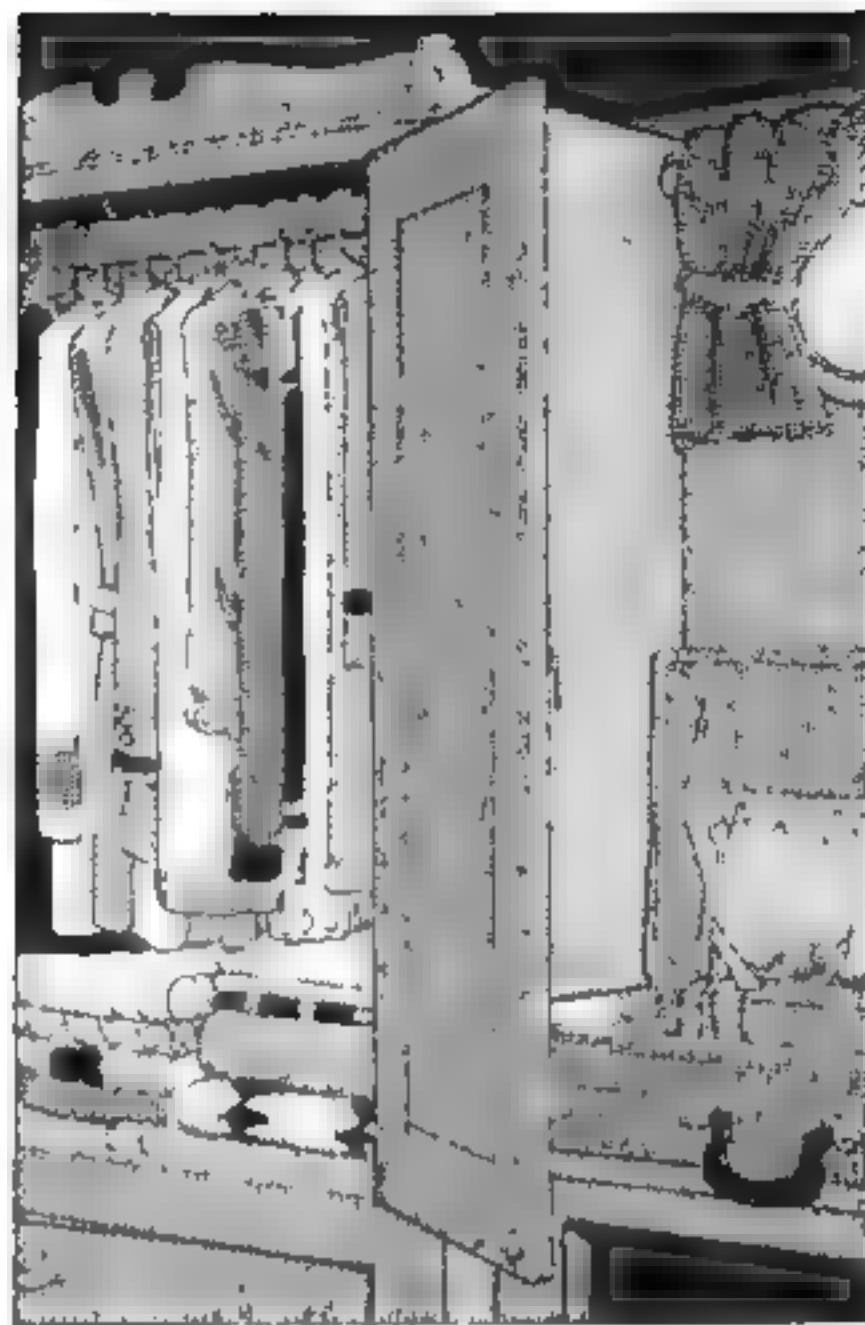
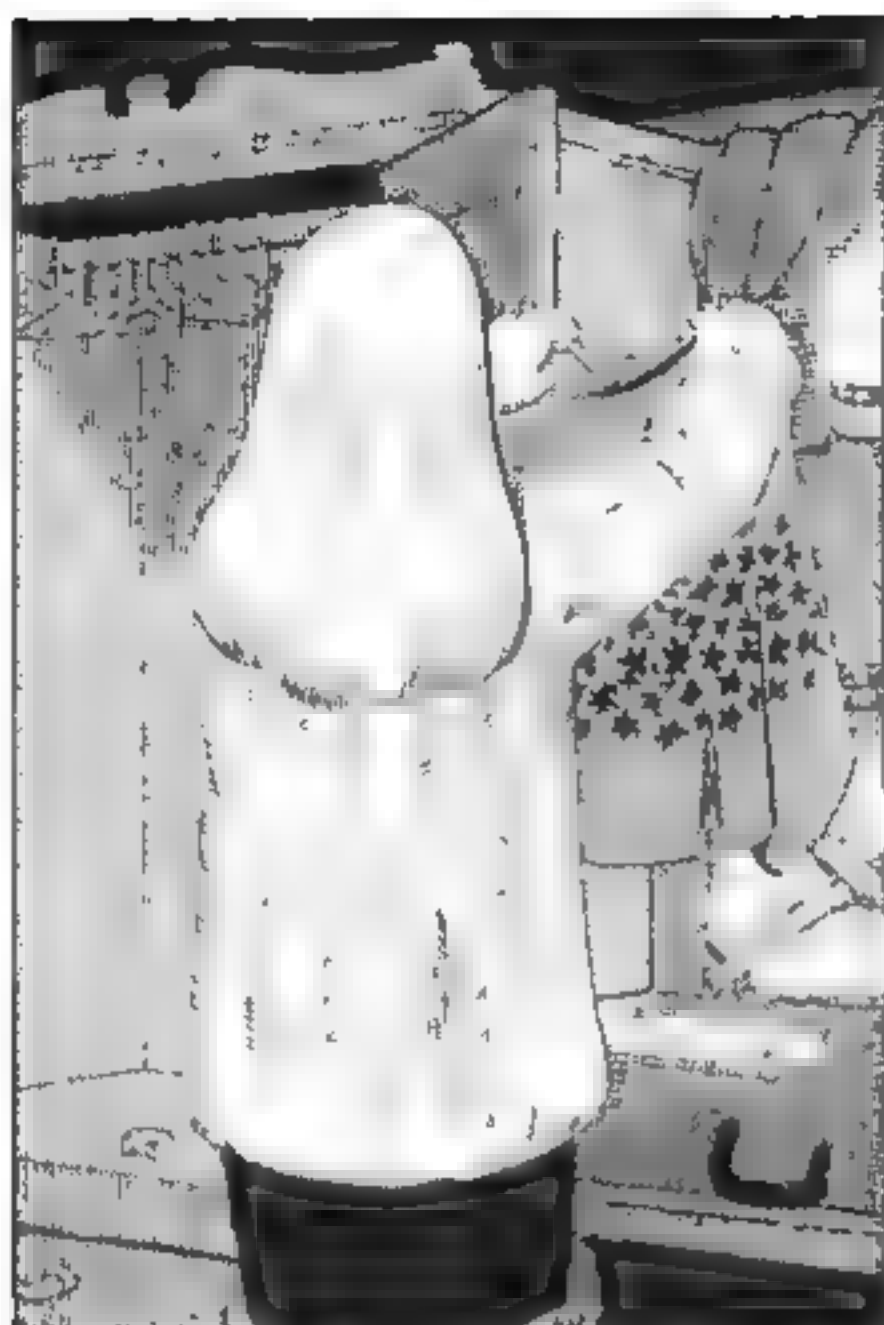


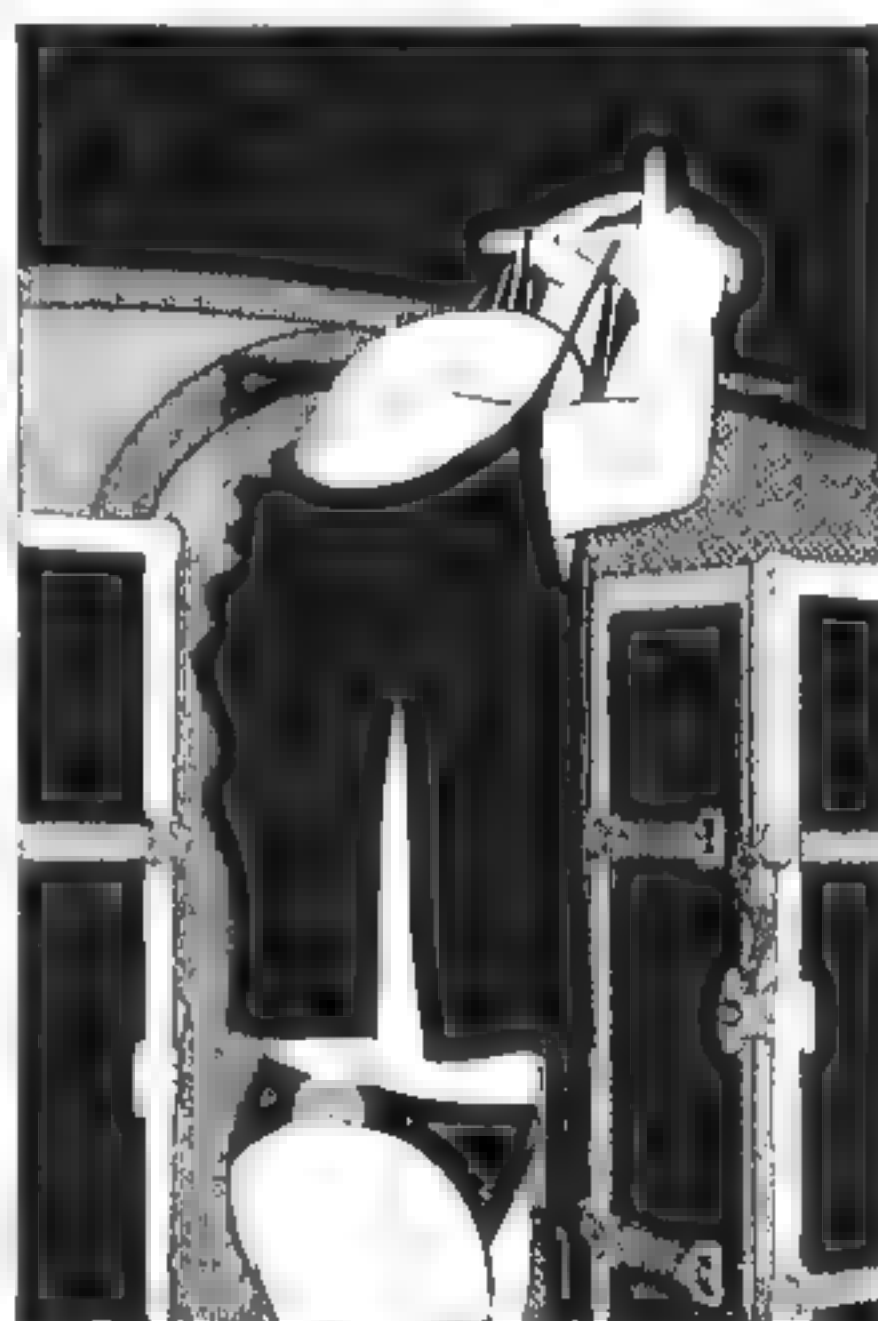
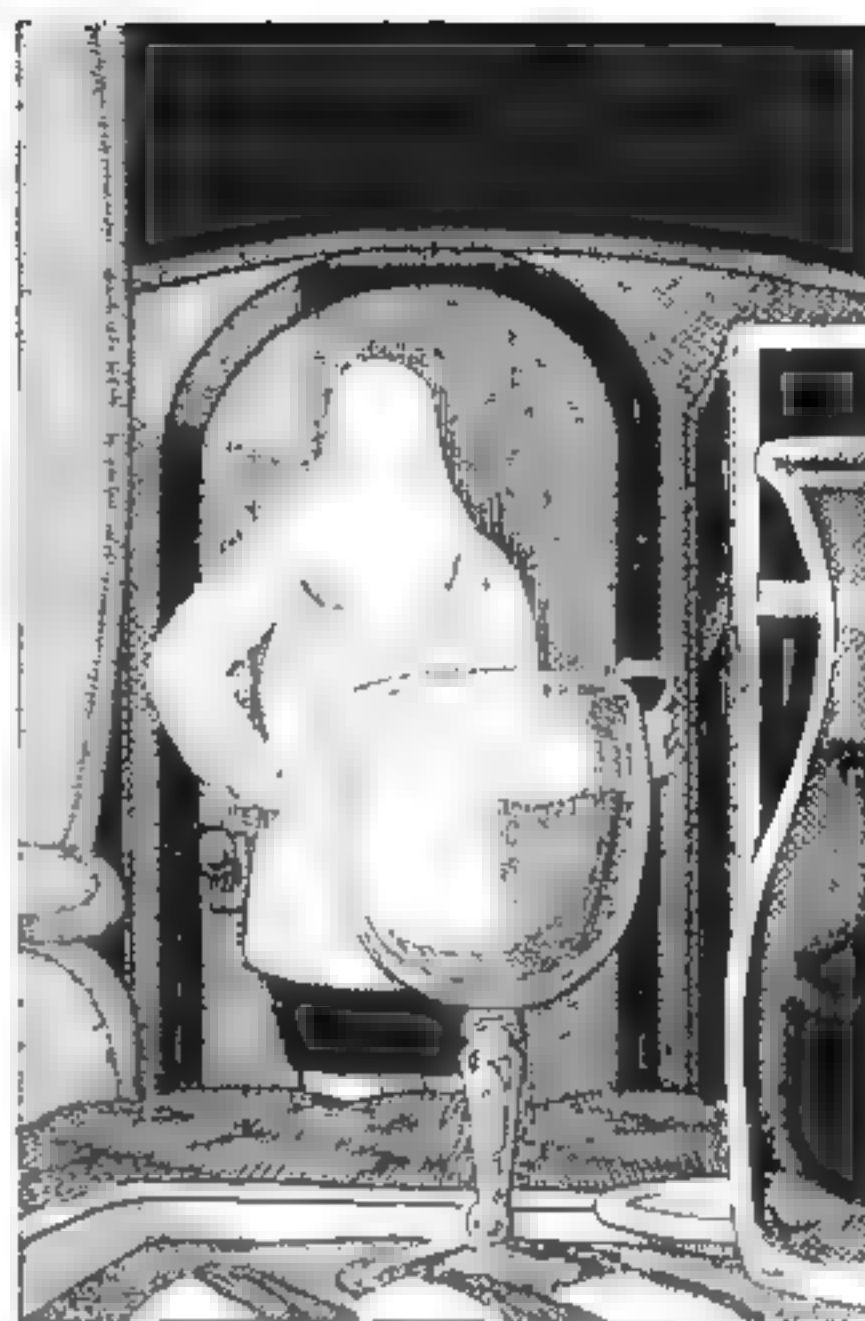


KNOCK  
KNOCK  
KNOCK

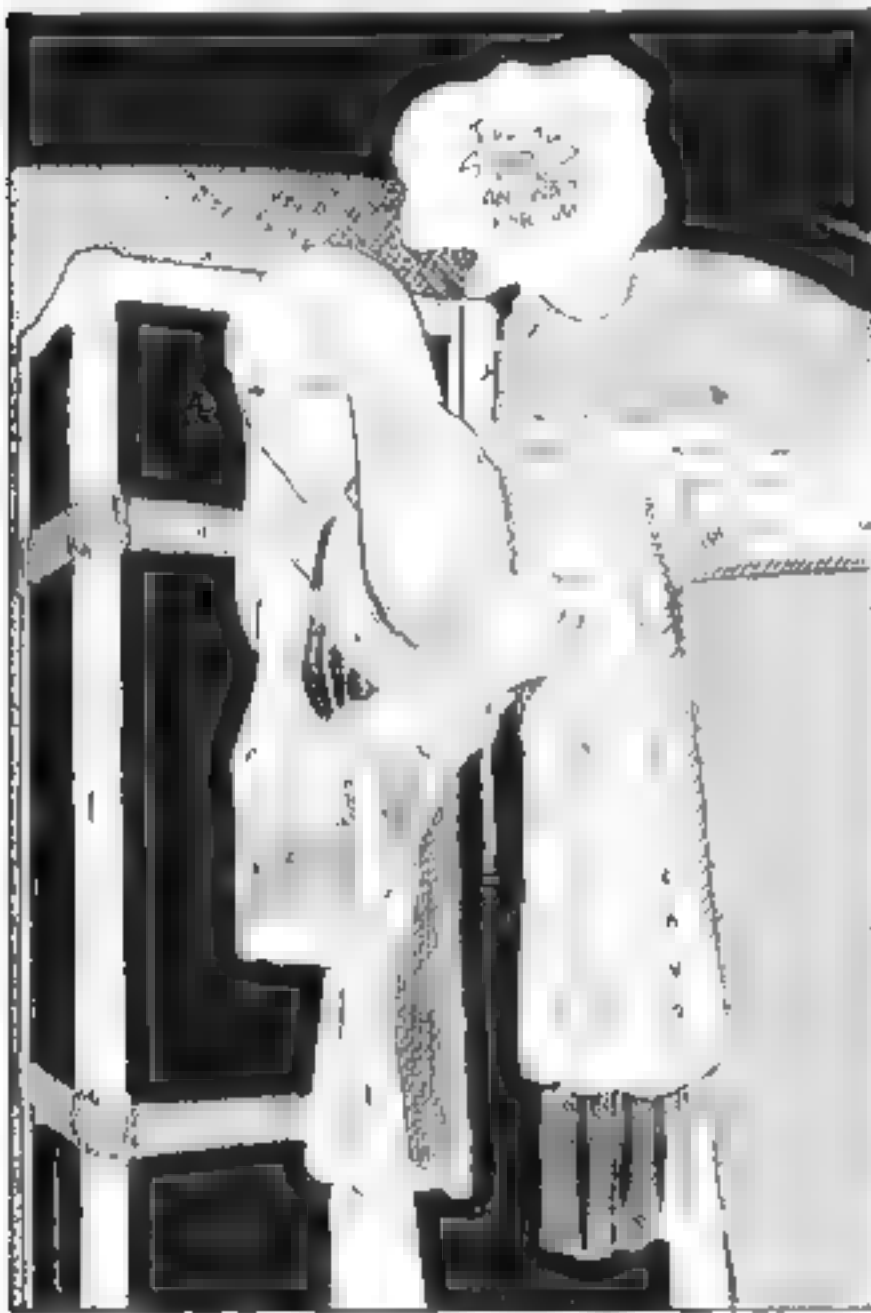
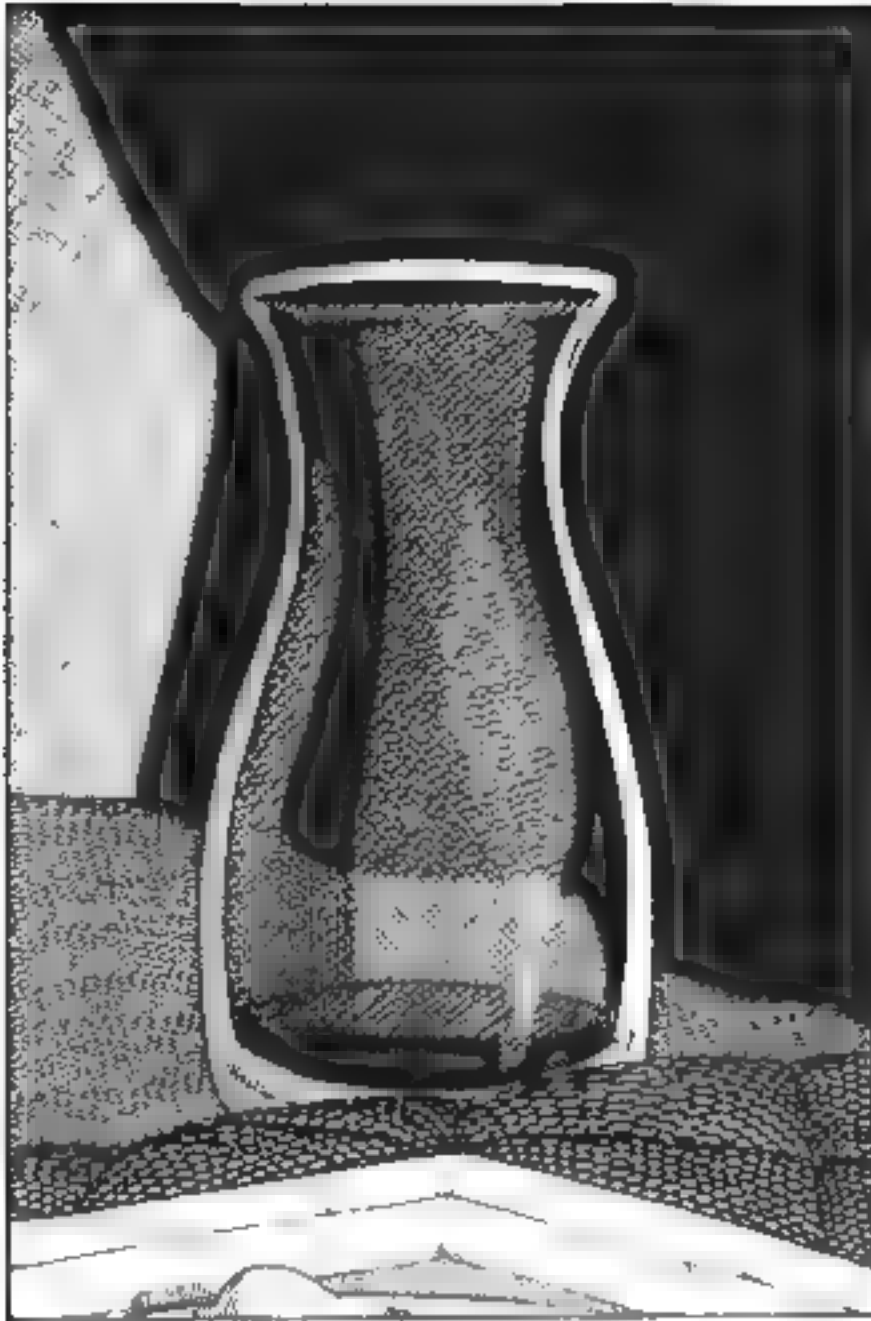




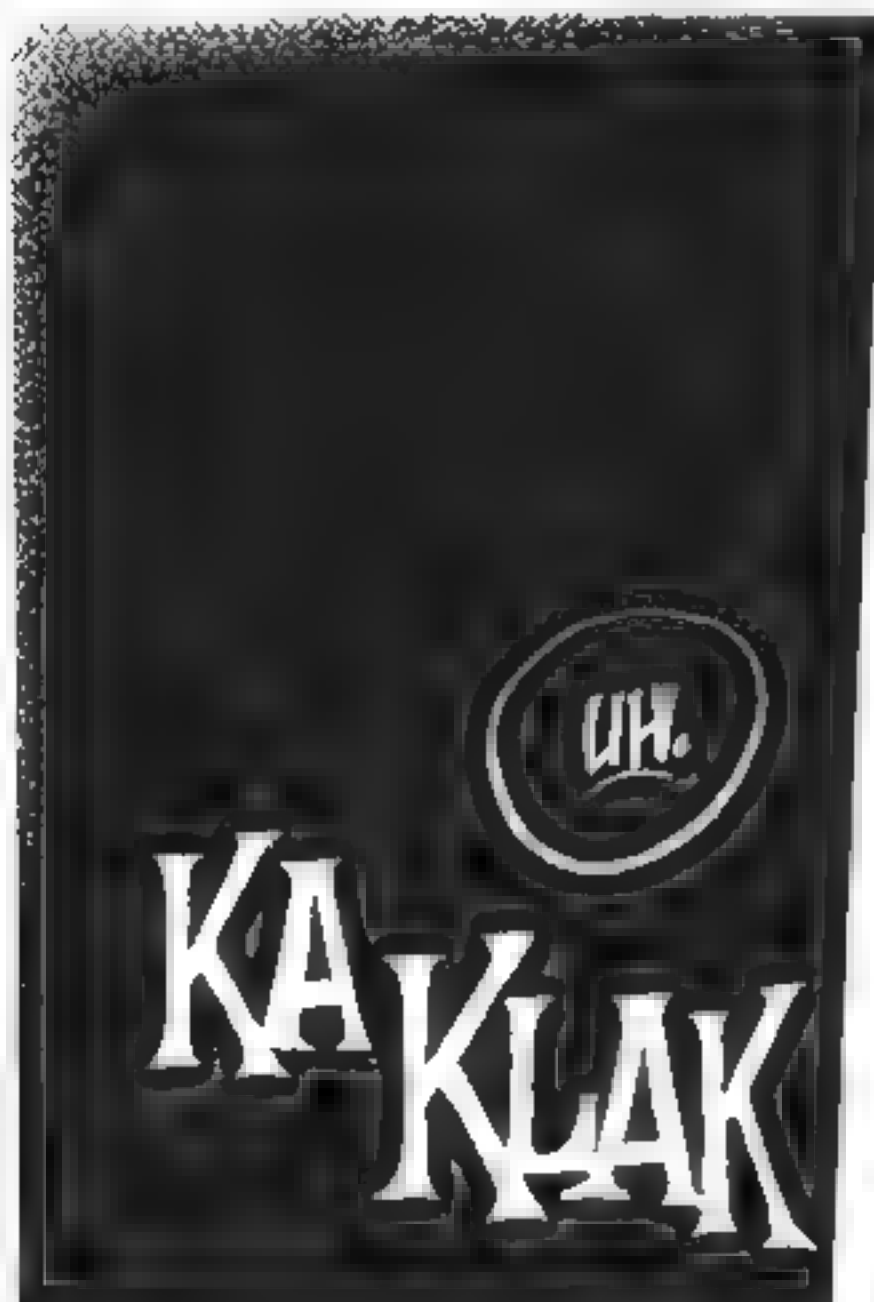
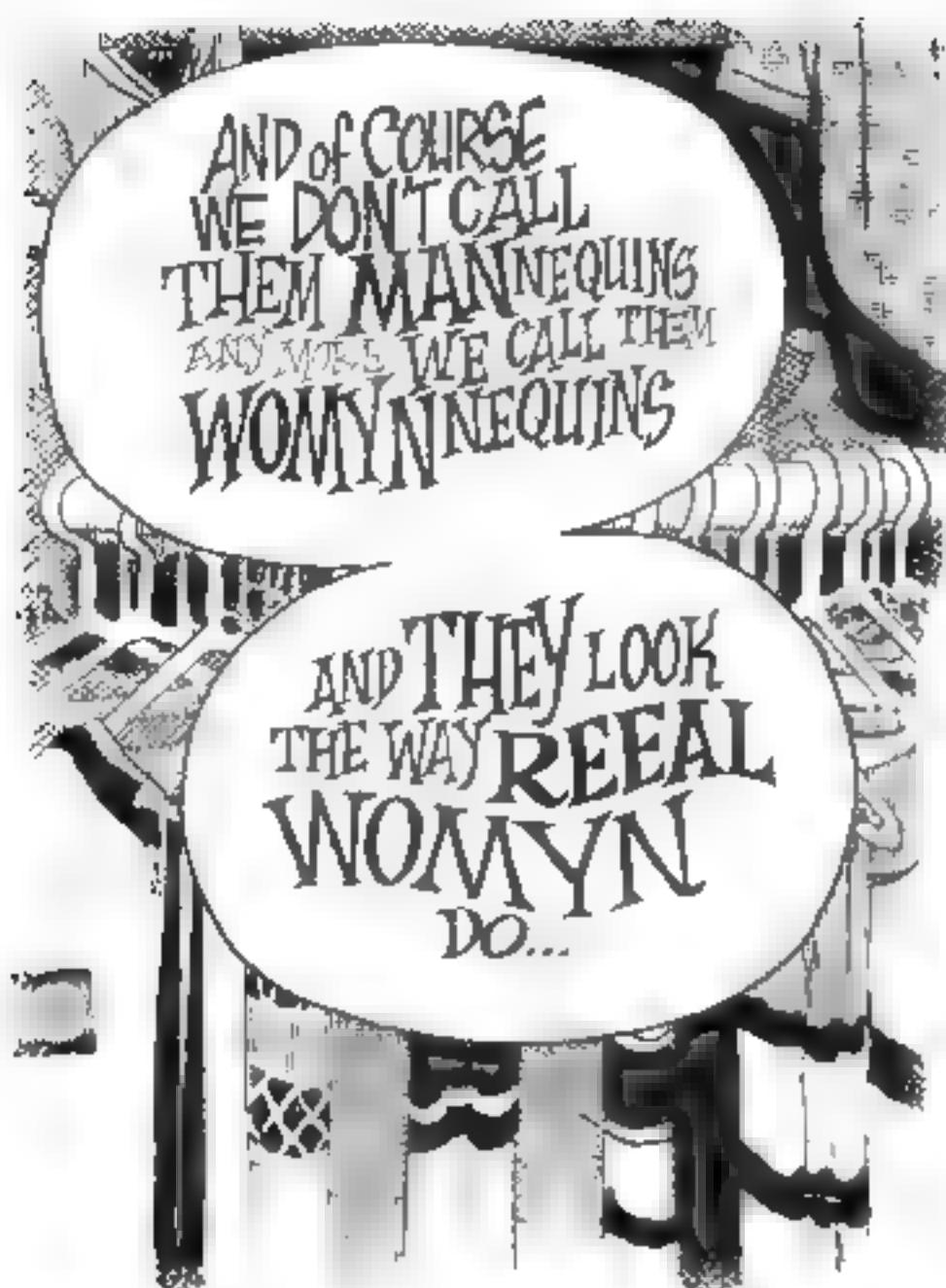


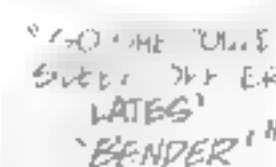
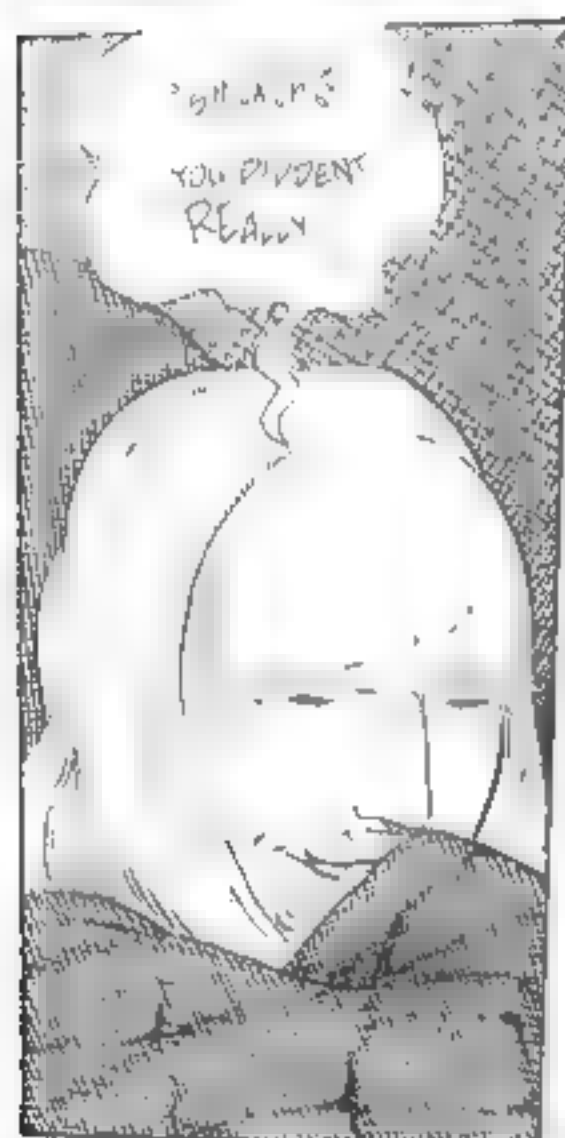
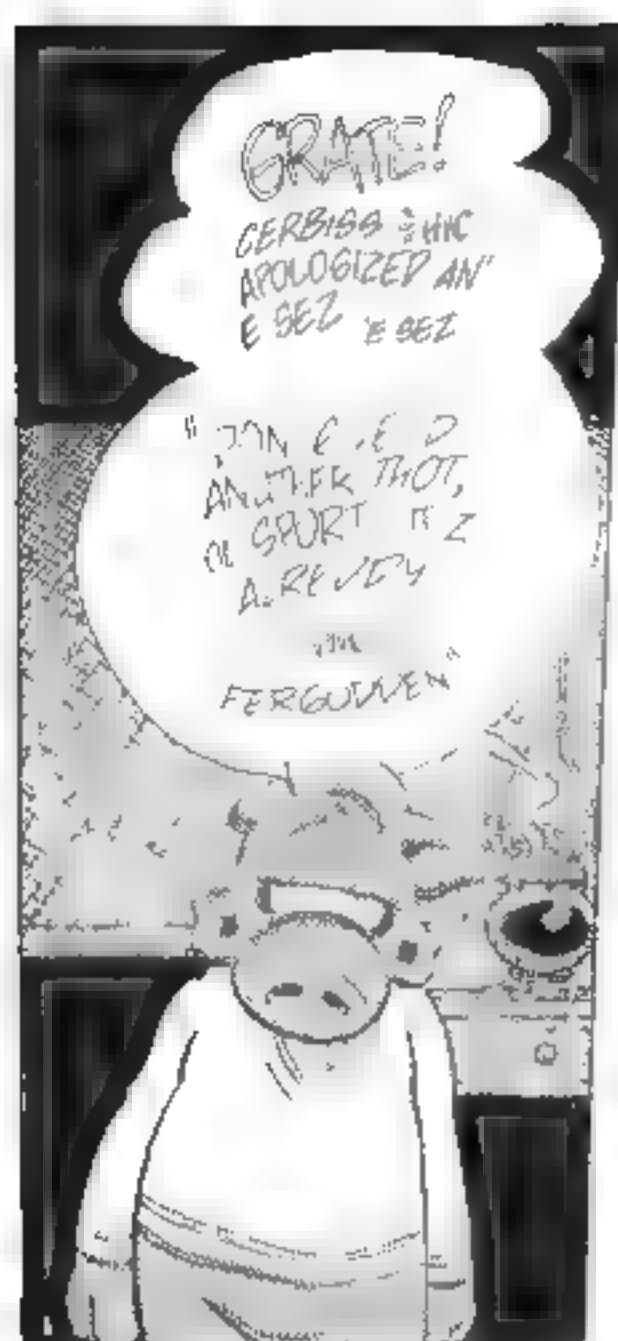




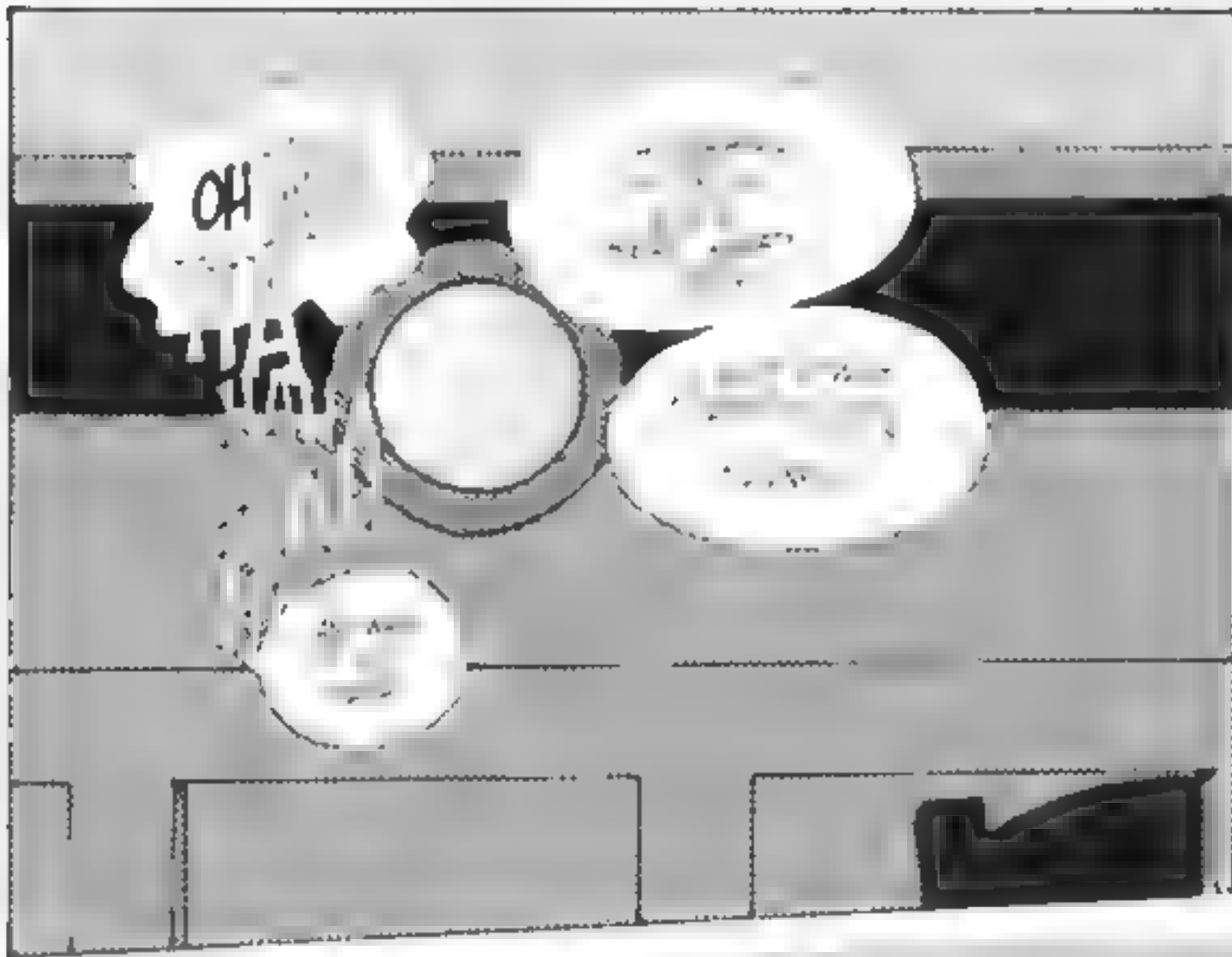














## GINEVRA

Jay Anthony Diver's almost immediate preoccupation with Ginevra — the Princess of Hearts, as she was popularly known — owed much to his increasing carelessness about himself. He had allowed himself to gravitate to her, desiring to document the desirable and fell, unwittingly, before a personality less vital, less compelling than his own, as he had done with Xena, his wife, some years before. As always he had slid into the matter by misjudging the inevitable outcome to be one possibility amid a vast array of likelihoods. He could say "No!" neither to others nor to himself; the virtuous and the corrupt alike found him tender-hearted and acquiescent. Indeed he seldom allowed of the possibility of negative outcomes until he was ringed 'round by high portentous walls, whereupon he would run to and fro in a panic, crying out that some other had built the walls or that this agency and that had built them — then, he would sit down to weep, confessing piteously that he had built the walls himself. Who can doubt that he was a wicked person. For if he were not wicked, who is — And what is there that we may call evil?

...I see I am starting wrong. Let me begin again.

Ginevra was of an age where all the men she knew were married or unmarriageable. "Men she knew"? — she concealed from herself that all the men she considered friends were vaguely in love with her. It was only those who had resisted professing that they valued her favor above anything in life whom she, in return, had loved.

Inevitably, as the bright moonlight of these men's love had waxed strong, the thin darkness of her own affections had waned. And now — where were they? At least two were dead, the rest scattered from the former T'Capmin Kingdoms to Enothas. She wondered whether any of them thought of her, and how often, and in what respect. Most of them must still picture the little princess or the dancing adolescent siren of...how

many years before, she did not permit herself to recollect.

The girls, too, were gone far afield. She had never been popular with those of her own gender. She had been too beautiful, too insufficiently lazy, too conscious of being a Tavers girl and not a "Future Wife and Mother" in perpetual capital letters. Girls who had surrendered their virtue to prospective husbands hinted darkly to each other — with bitter expressions on their attractive but not particularly wholesome faces—that Ginevra hadn't. Then these girls had gone north or west or east with the men they had reduced to mere husbands, prophesying, if they prophesied about Ginevra, that she would come to a bad end — not wanting to realise that all endings are bad and that their lives, like hers, were inevitably the result and the sum of many incremental destinies.

#### JOZAN

A "scrolls and key" man (as the young gentlemen of Jay Anthony's generation knew the type), Jozan possessed all the reverent correctnesses of a "good egg," reverent notions of chivalry and implicit nobility — and (though natural and unfortunate) the reverent prejudices and reverent ignorances in lockstep attendance upon them — all those qualities which Ginevra's breeding led her to admire, but which, nevertheless, she rather despised. Unlike the overwhelming preponderance of his type, however, she had found that he was not a bore. He had a peculiar attractiveness, unexpected depths of wit, and with him she owned the certainty of his most apparent trait — call it naiveté, fidelity, romanticism, or some approximation bounded by the three — that he would do anything within his power to please her.

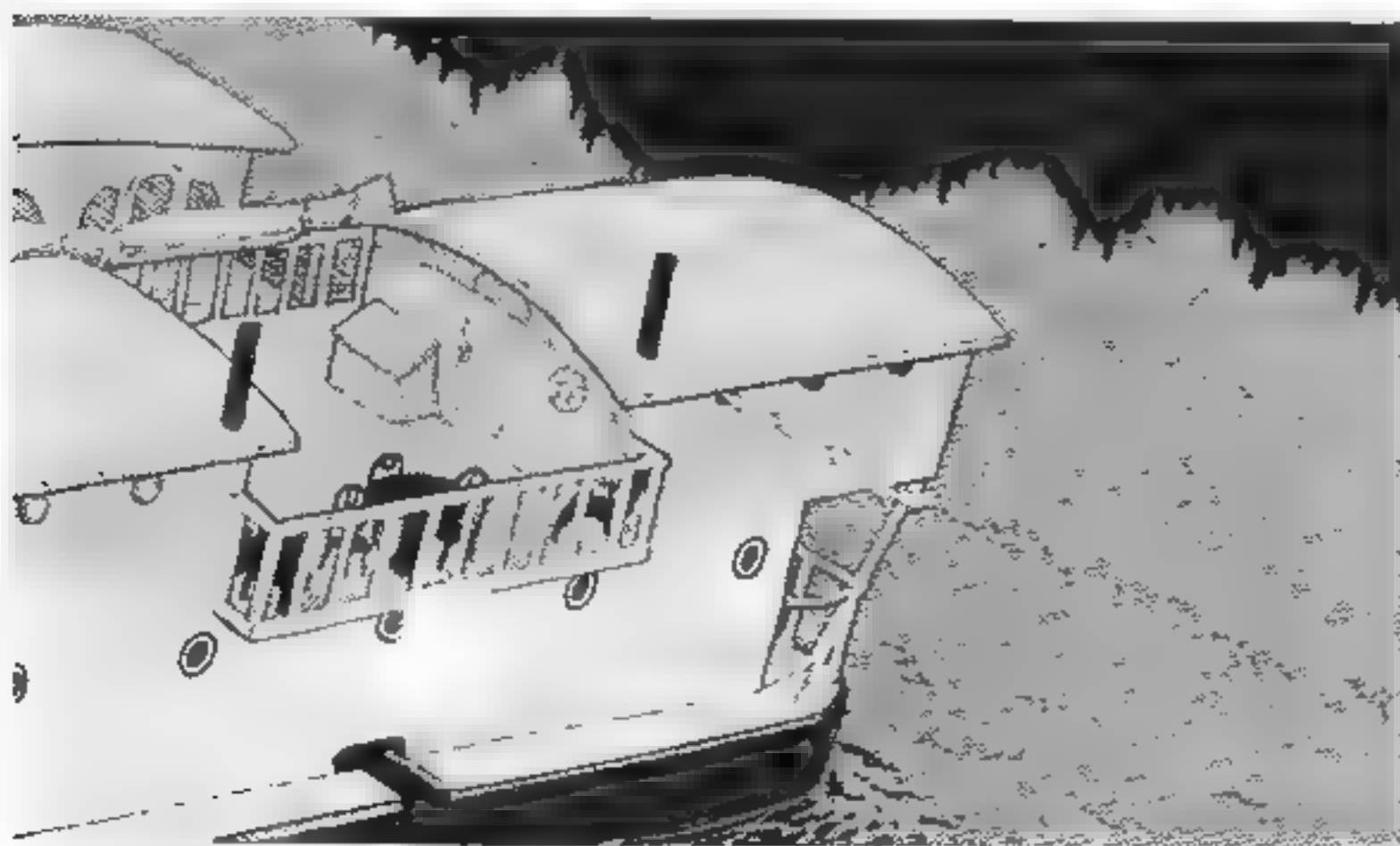
It seemed to Jay Anthony that Jozan had told her this (among other things) quite reverently and with ponderous masculinity, which ill concealed a predisposition to embrace its own suffering. Loving him already, a compassion — which might

yet erode into pity — had moved within her, and she had kissed him one night because his plight was charming, a relic of a vanishing sensibility — stolid yet not wholly ungraceful — already in the process of being displaced by far less noble strains of foolishness.

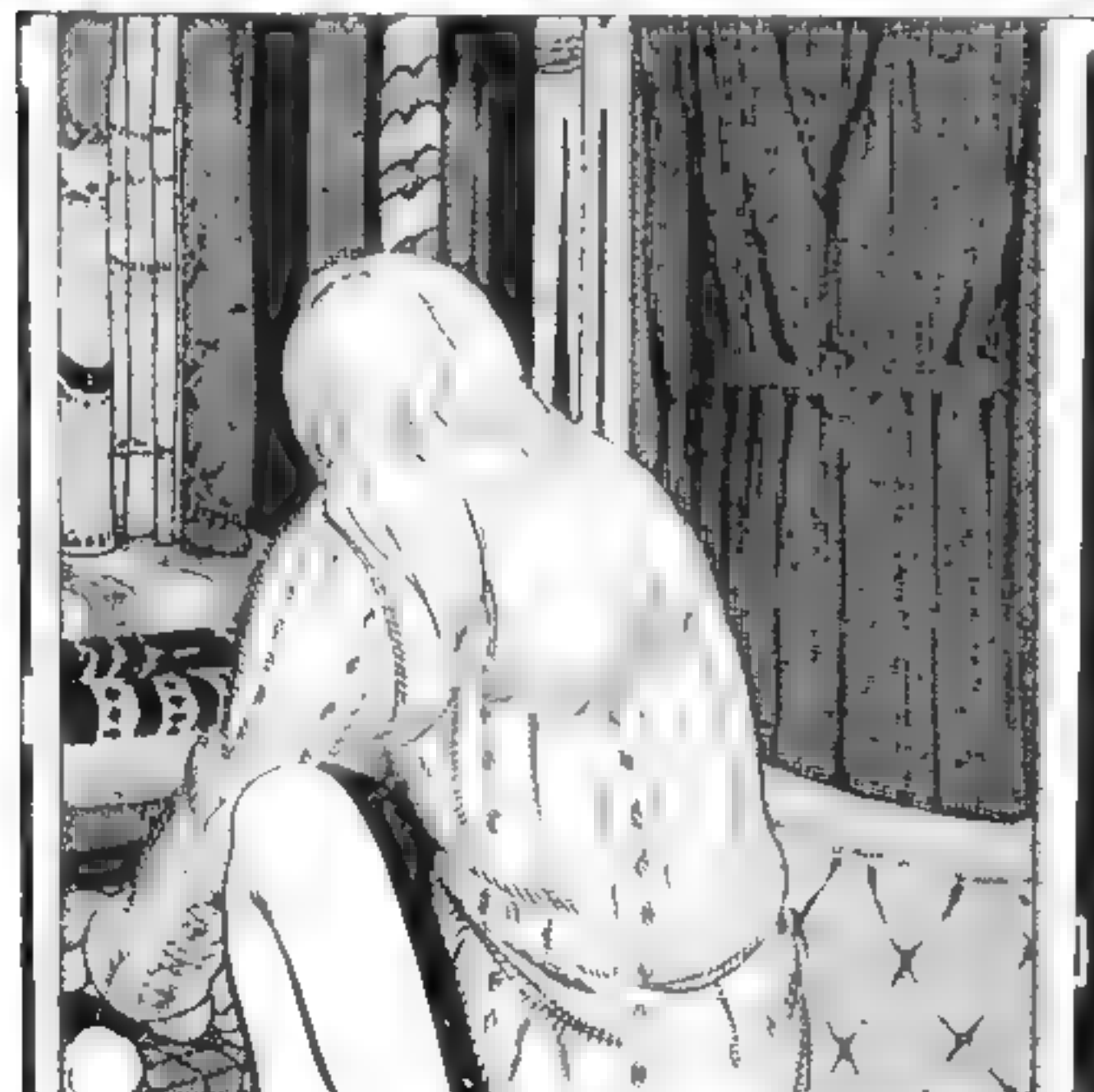
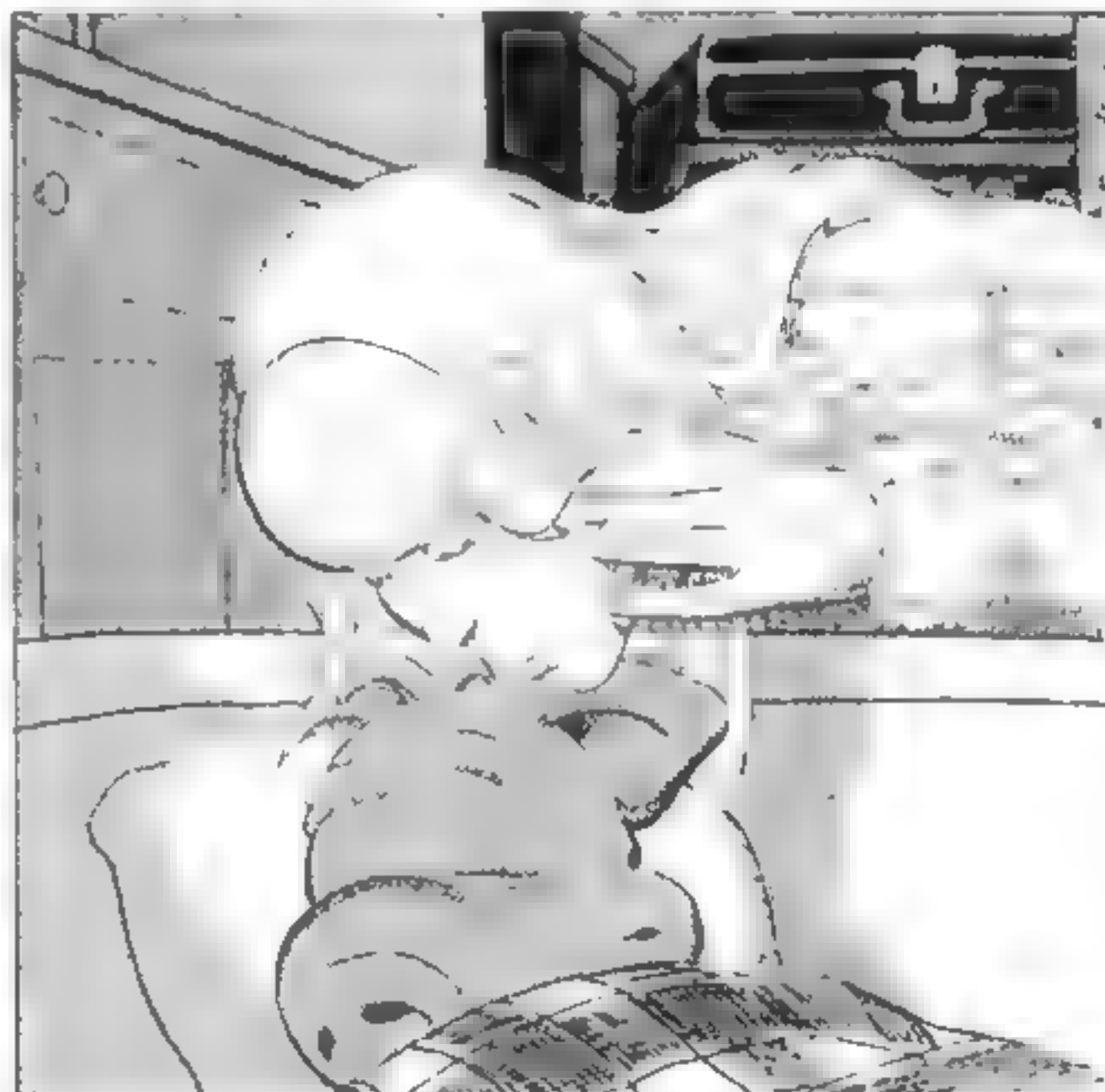
Upon that first kiss, he surmised their life in tandem tottered in its uncertainty.

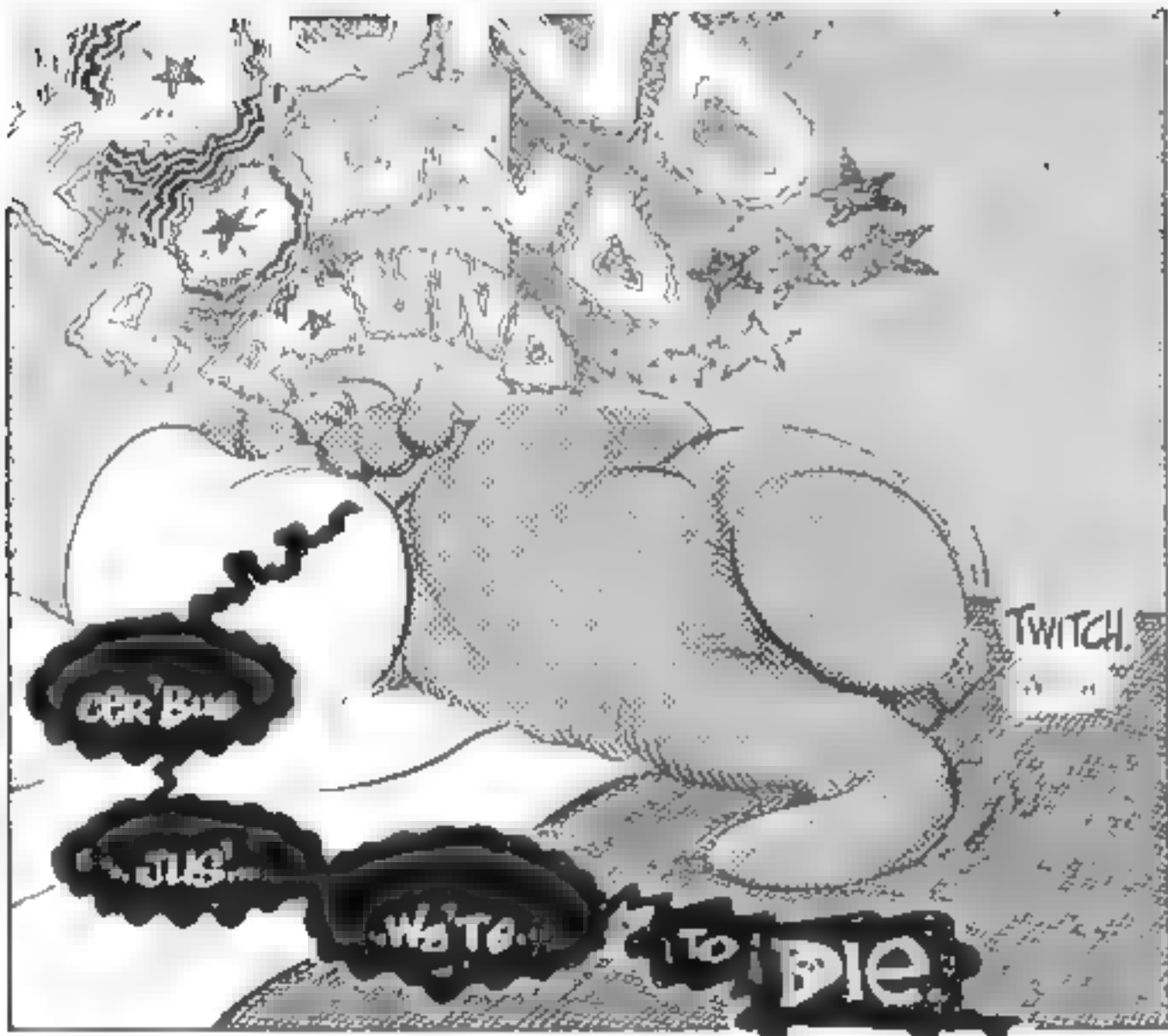
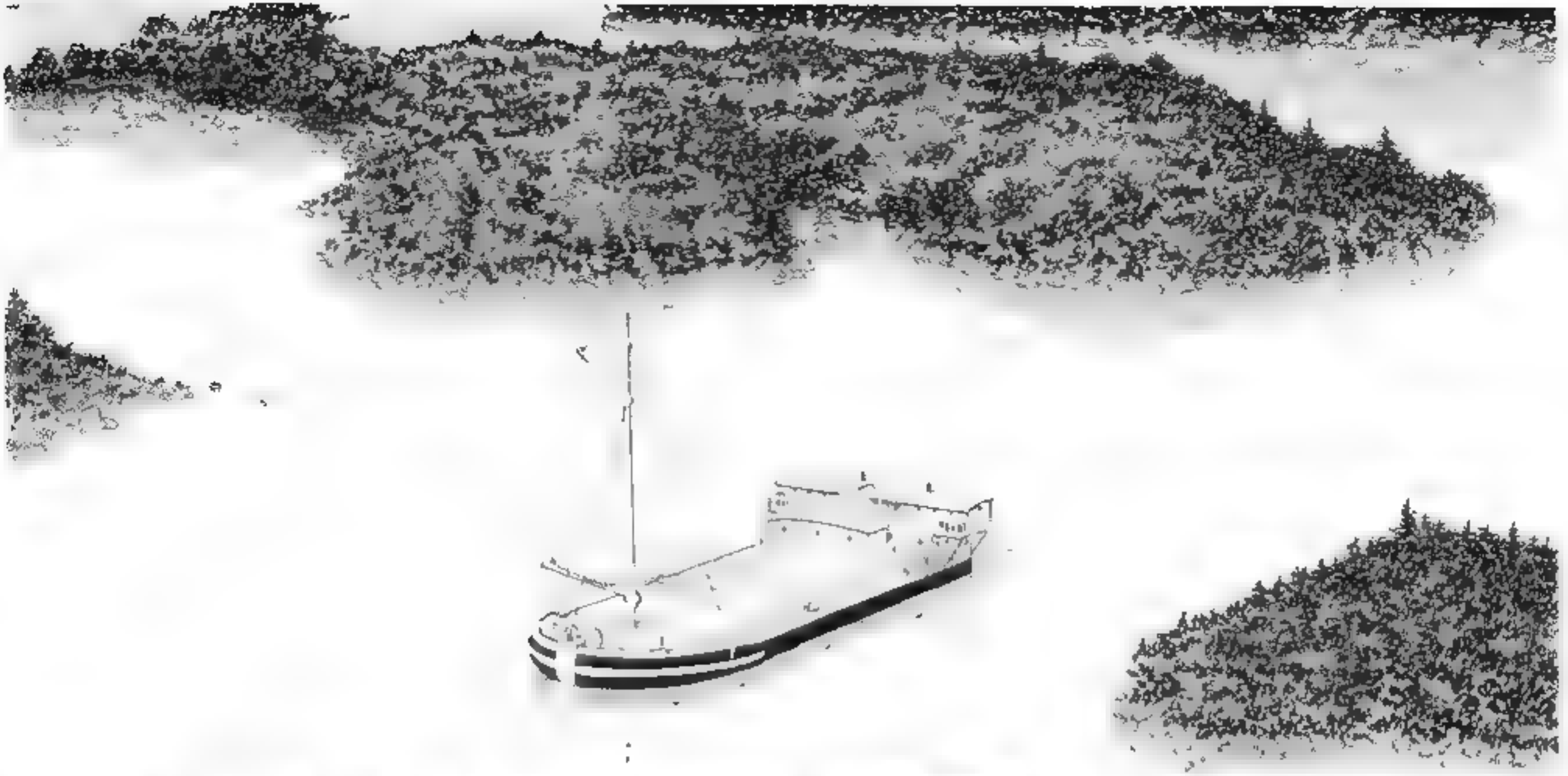
They were just at the beginning of the struggle to keep their conversations on the level of discussions. Arguments were corrosive of the gilt veneer of Ginevra's disposition. She had all her life been associated with men who, desiring to possess her intimidating beauty, chose never to contradict her, so that, effectively, she regarded all men as intellectually inferior to herself. Naturally, then, it irritated her that Jozan was emerging from the quiescent state wherein he had previously regarded her pronouncements as definitive and infallible.

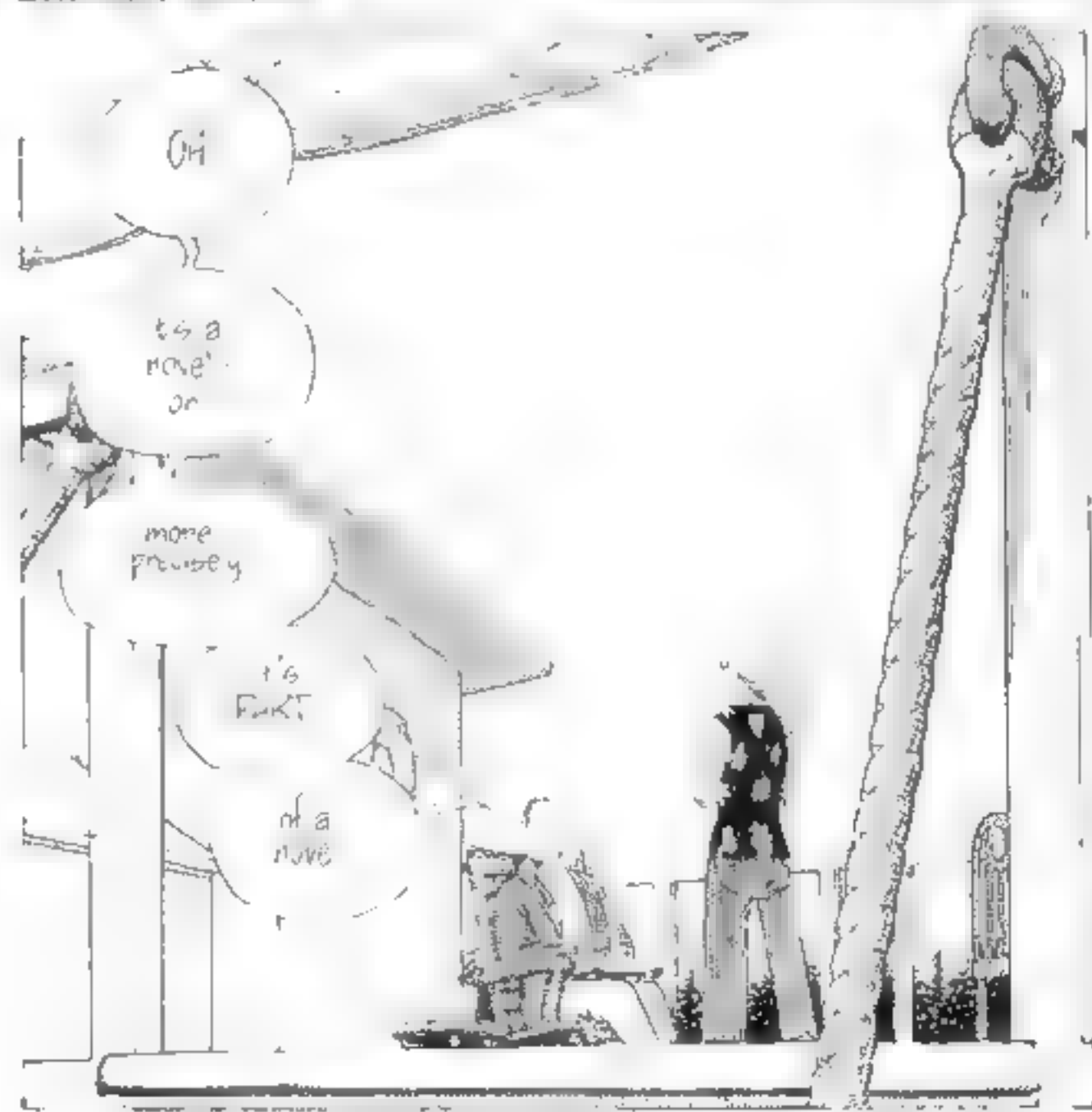
Jay Anthony realised, at once, that the friction was the result (partly) of her female nature and (partly) of her beauty, and he included her with the majority of her sex as distinctly and irretrievably limited. It amused him to find that she had no notion of ethics. Her sole intellectual tactic, when a subject did interest her, consisted of battering the opposing view into submission with relentless and tiring non sequiturs. What was chiefly missing from her mind was an awareness of order and consequence, an awareness of life as a mysteriously integrated unity — but he understood that such a quality in her would have been incongruous.













I SHOULD LIKE  
TO READ WHAT  
YOU'VE WRITTEN  
SO FAR

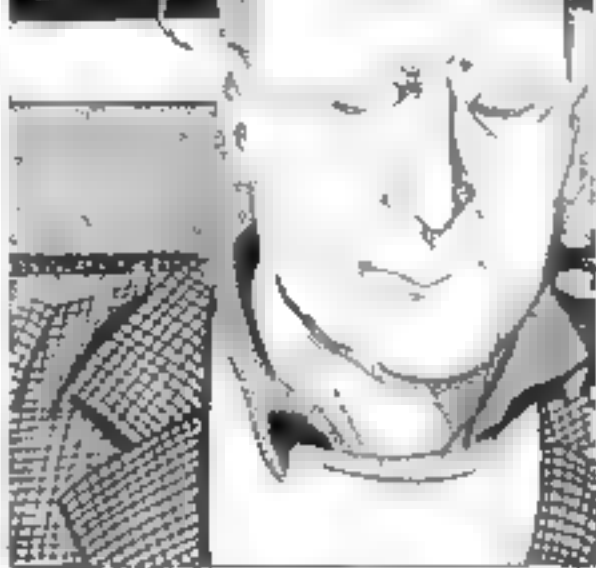


Oh

I'm asking  
that chair

Life

out of  
the



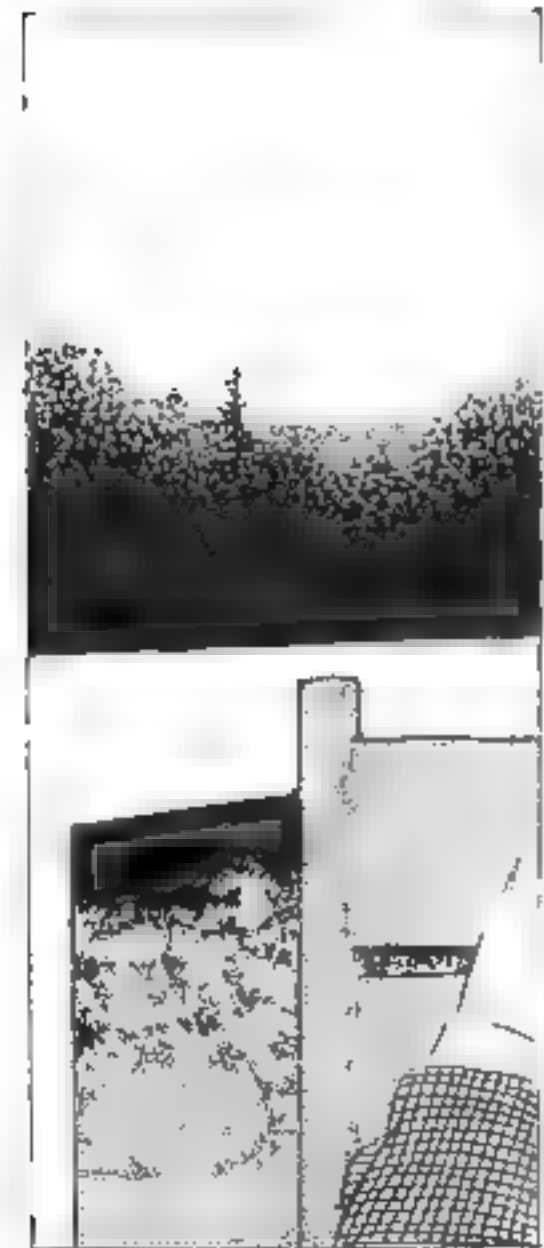
DON'T YOU  
EVER

THE

OF NUDING  
PEOPLE'S PRIVATE  
LIVES?

JUST TO  
FEEL YOUR  
OWN NUDITY?

All  
unnecessary  
attention  
has toxic  
tendencies.



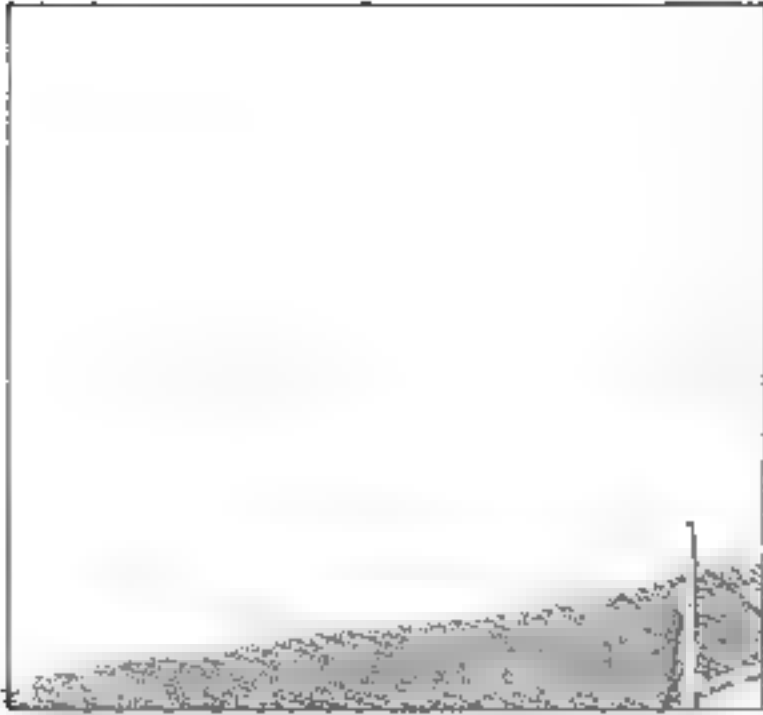
I TIRE of  
many  
things.

Your  
ma eby

I TIRE of the way  
red n perception that I SOMEHOW  
regard my NUDITY (as you call it)

SWOLEN to ME is rather an  
proportions by the unnecessary  
attention I sust. red n  
my twenties and thirties

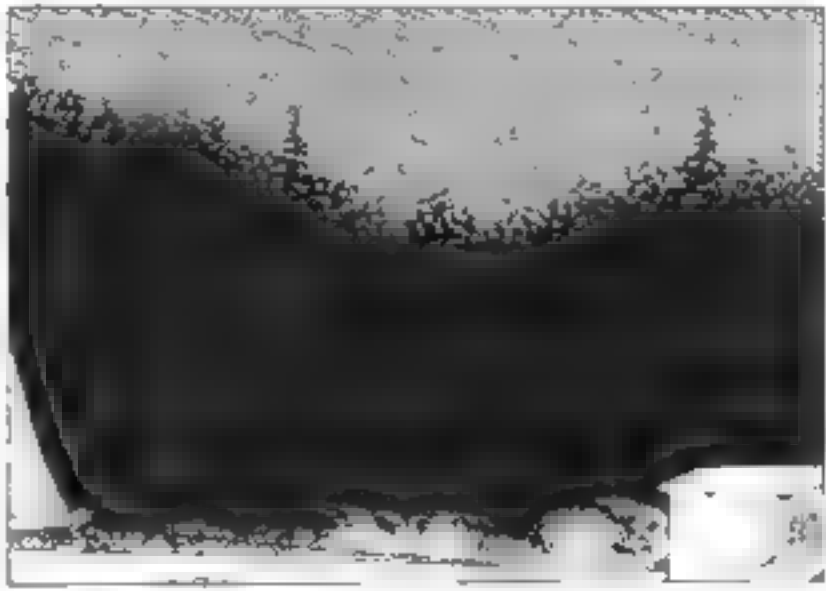
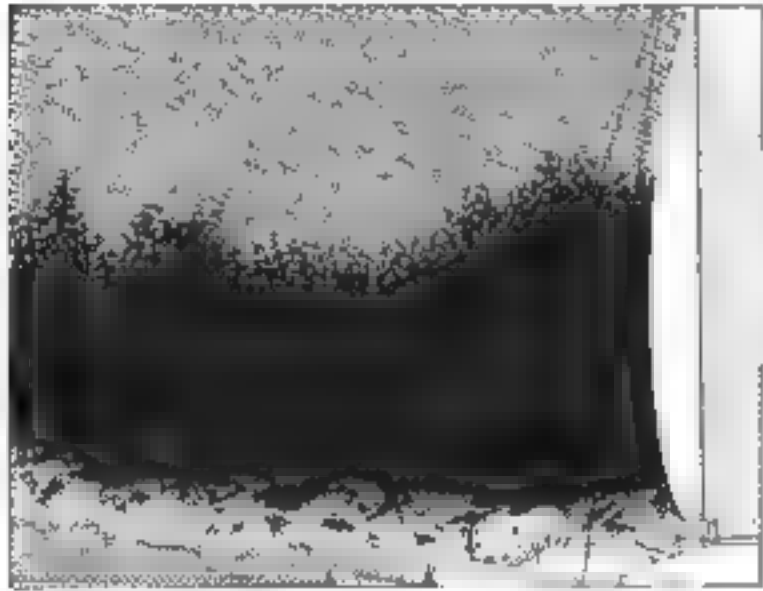
as requiring some  
manner of constant  
nourishment



I TIRE... of having to anticipate...  
Maternal... Reactions to my work while  
it is still in progress

I TIRE... of having to  
GUESS which piece of my  
writing has led to my wife  
being moved to some squard  
room in the Sanitarium's  
basement

...and Which piece  
has led to her relocation  
to a bright airy room  
on an upper floor.. with  
a panoramic view of the  
Sanitarium grounds



I TIRE... of spending  
innumerable days signing  
autographs and answering  
name questions in snabby,  
foul-smelling taverns



I TIRE... of being  
"promoted" inexplicably  
to new and glittering  
Community Centers.

and then being JUST  
as inexplicably... "Demoted"  
to the same shabby fou  
smelling taverns

I  
TIRE...

your  
Miserably

of being JUDGED... SNEERED  
at... SNUBBED... and SLIGHTED

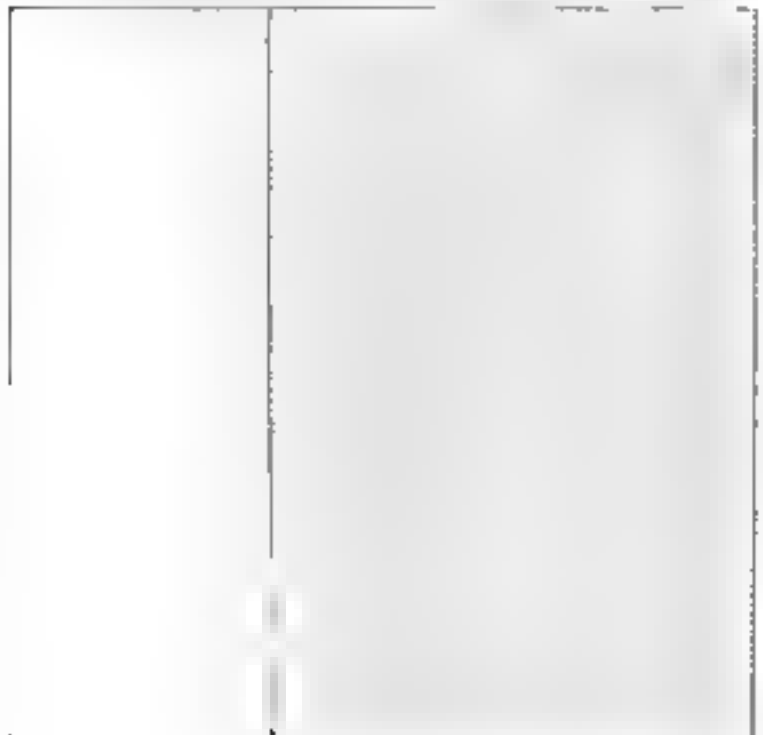
by persons to whom so  
far as I know I have  
never been formally  
introduced

OR by those  
whom I have met  
only briefly

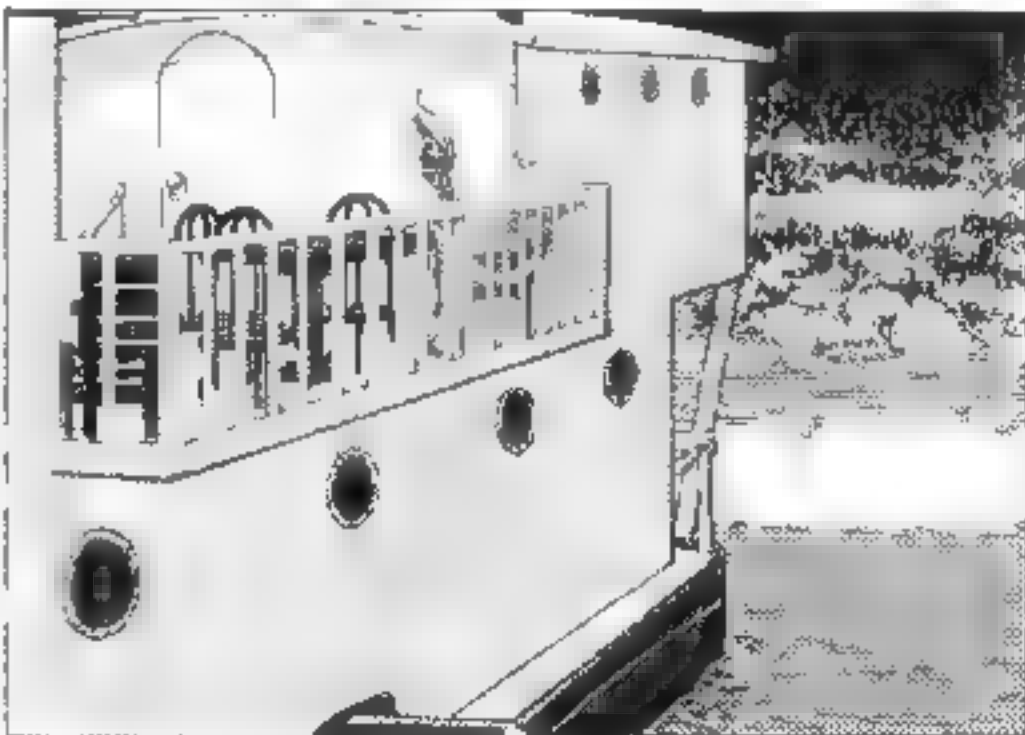
OR  
in passing

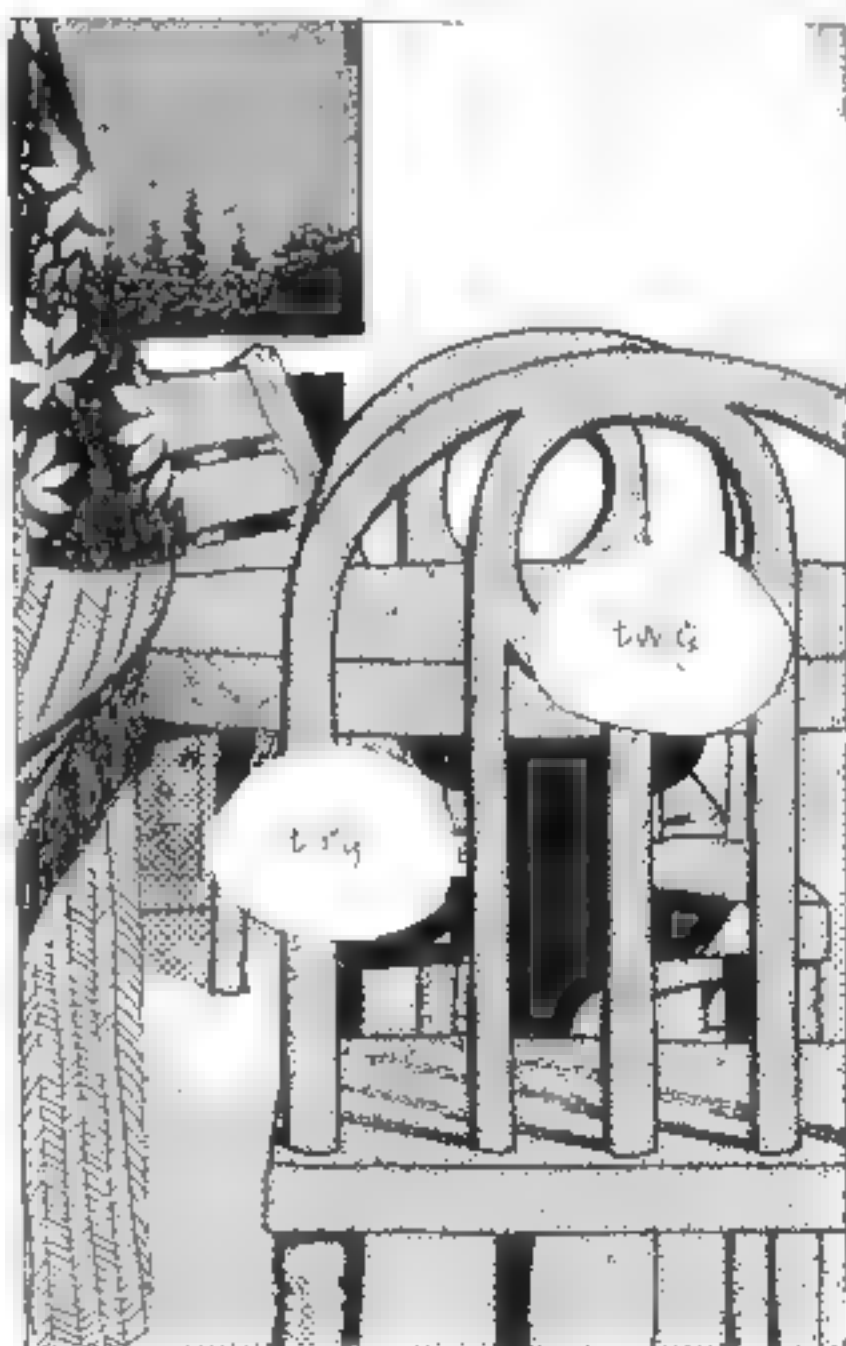
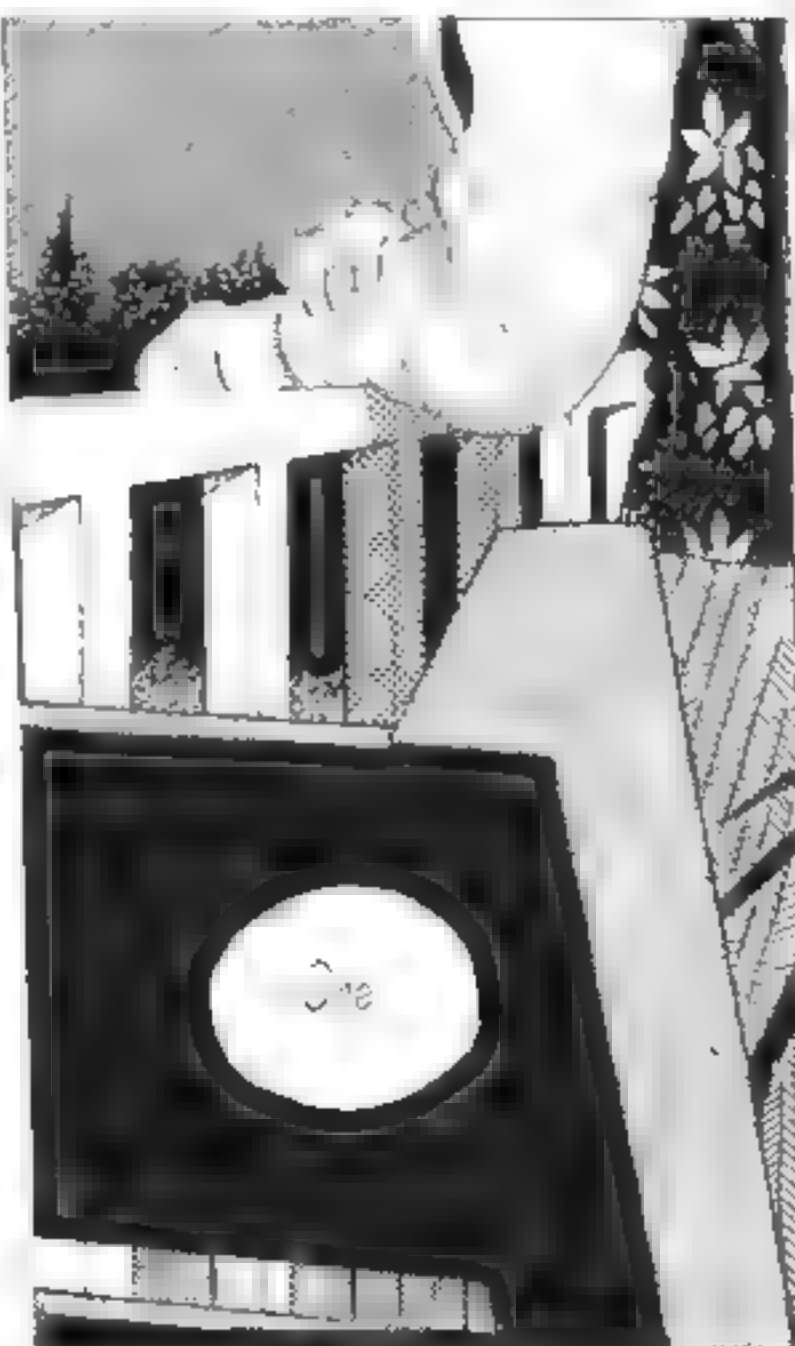
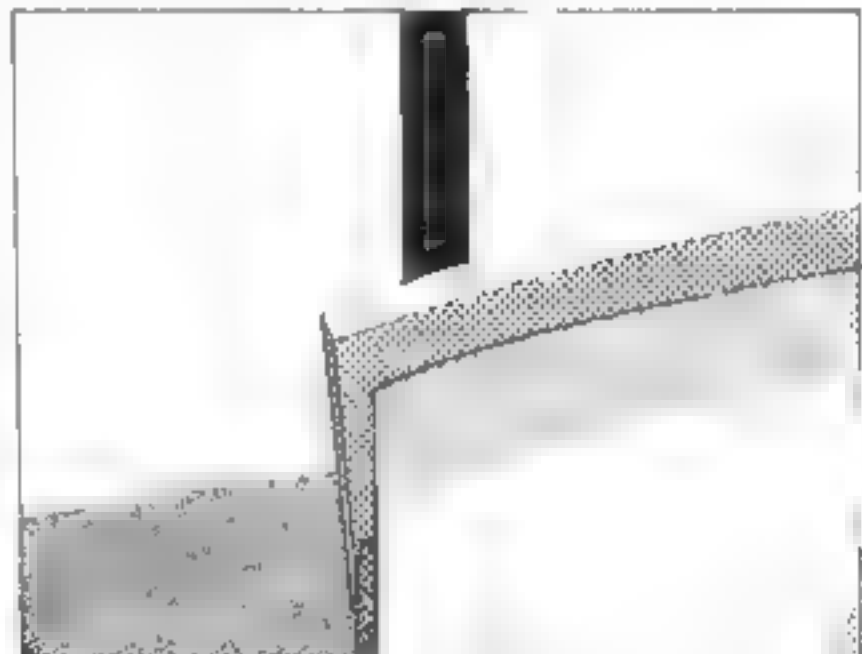
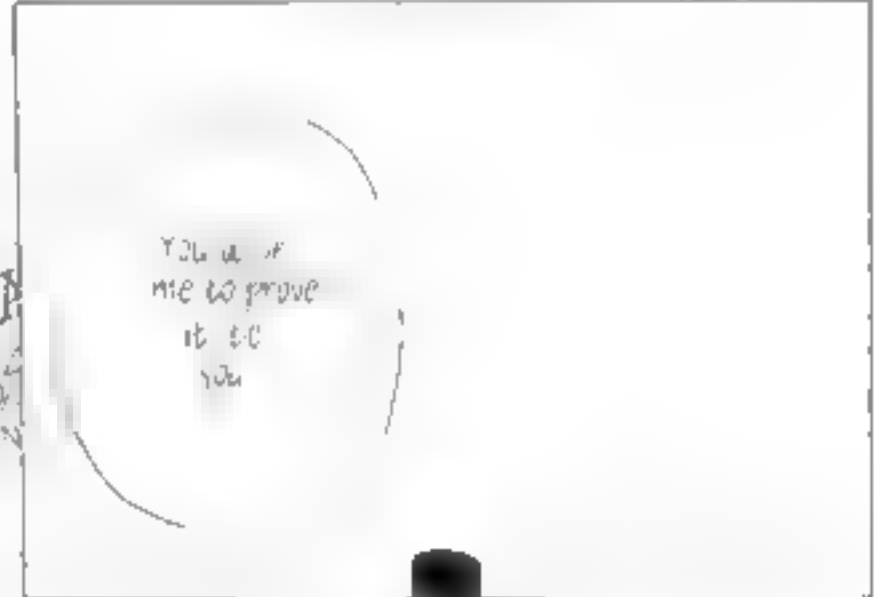
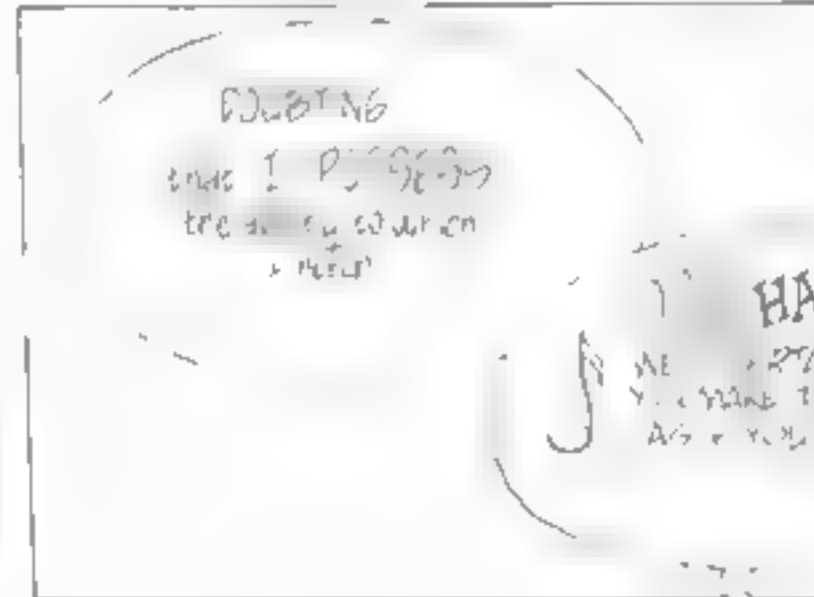
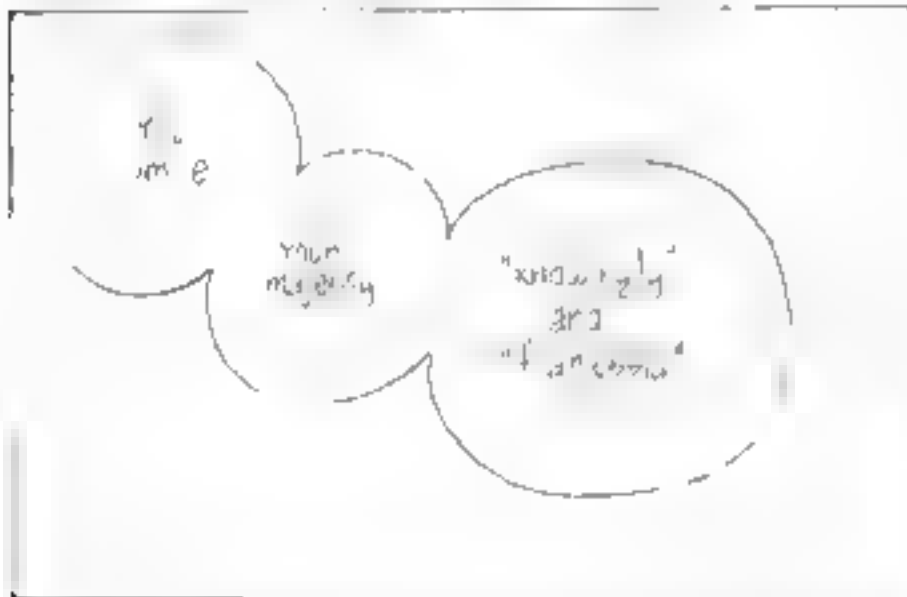
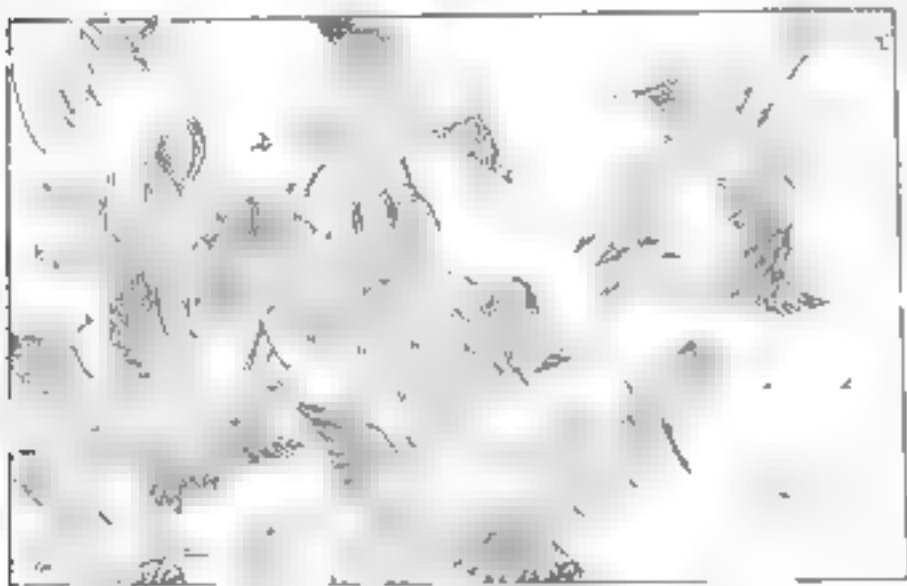
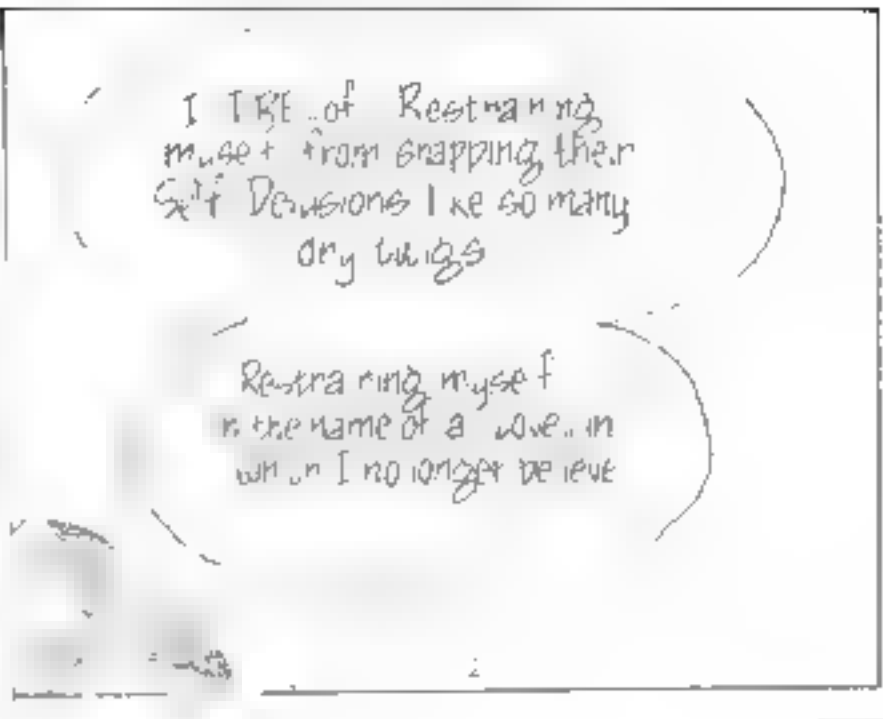
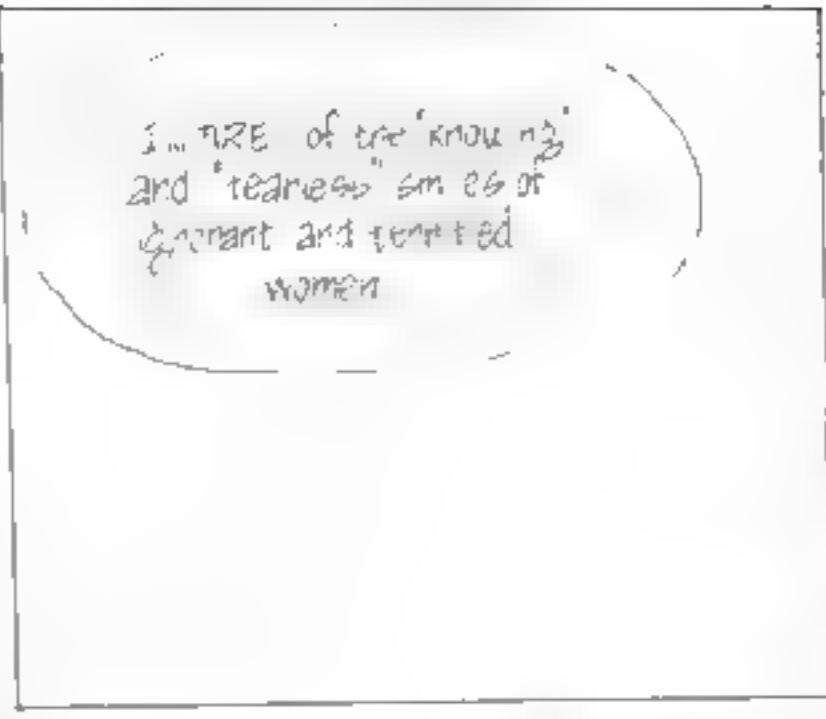
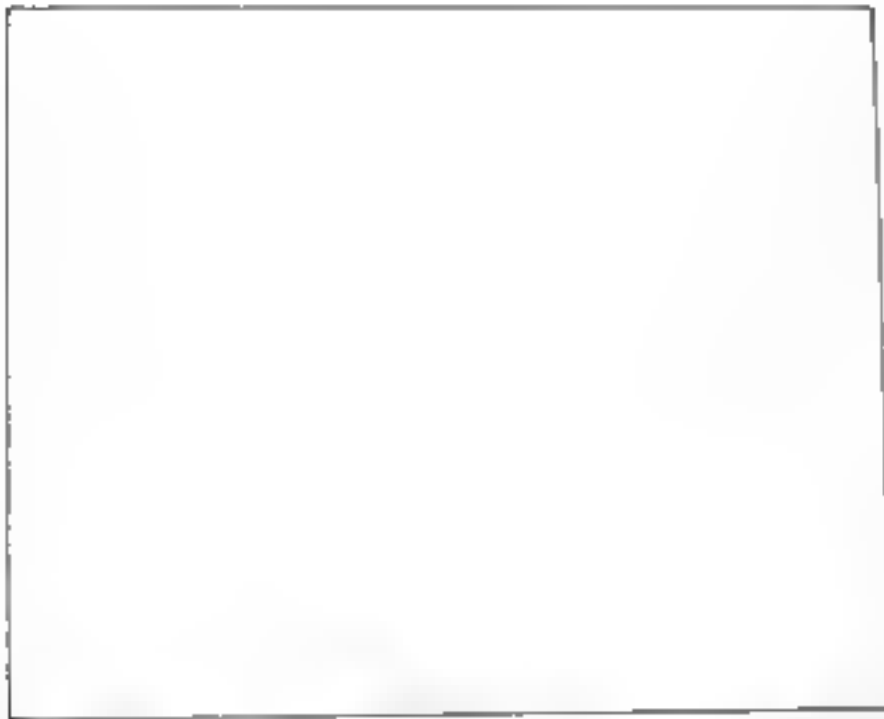
OR  
on a handful  
of occasions

usually  
at a party

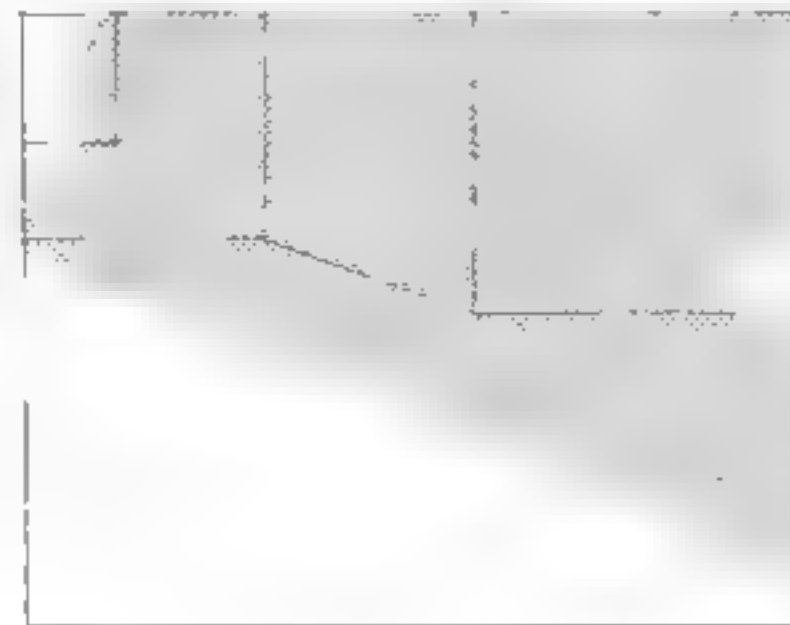
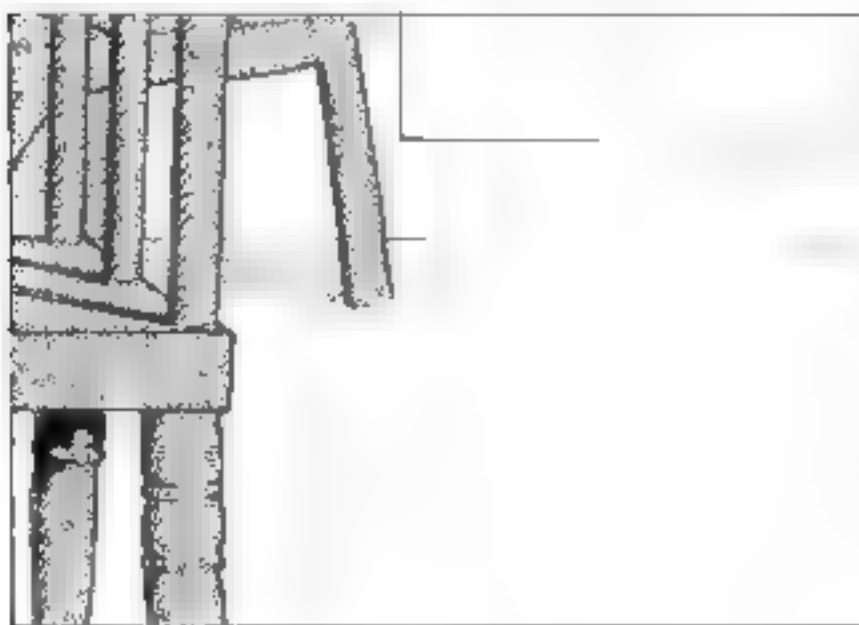
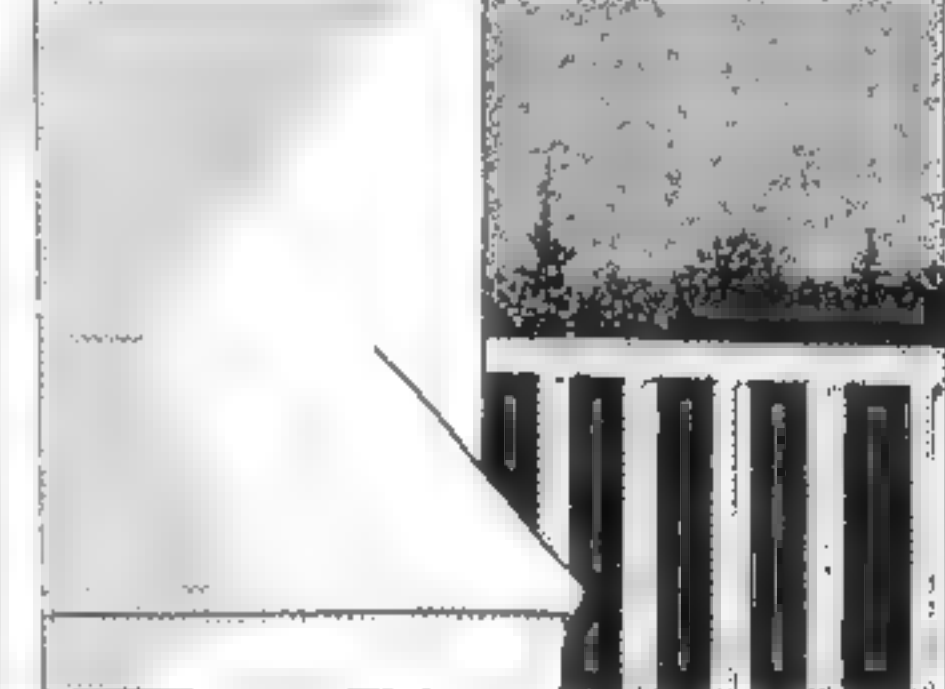
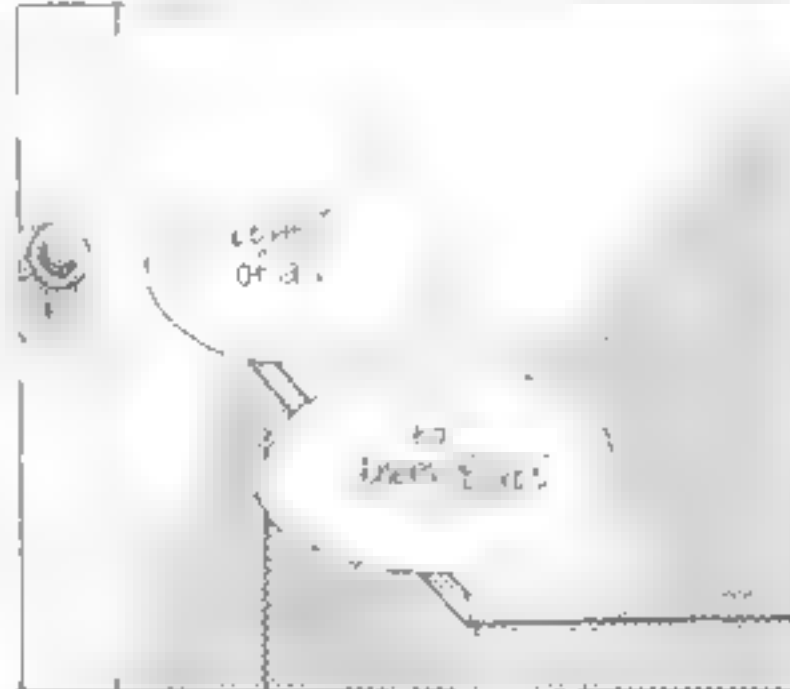
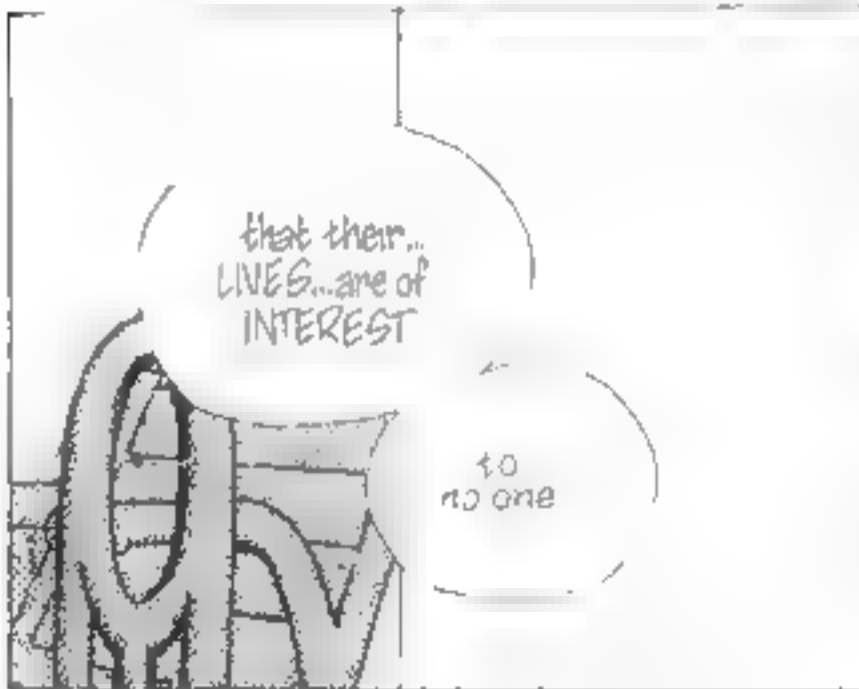
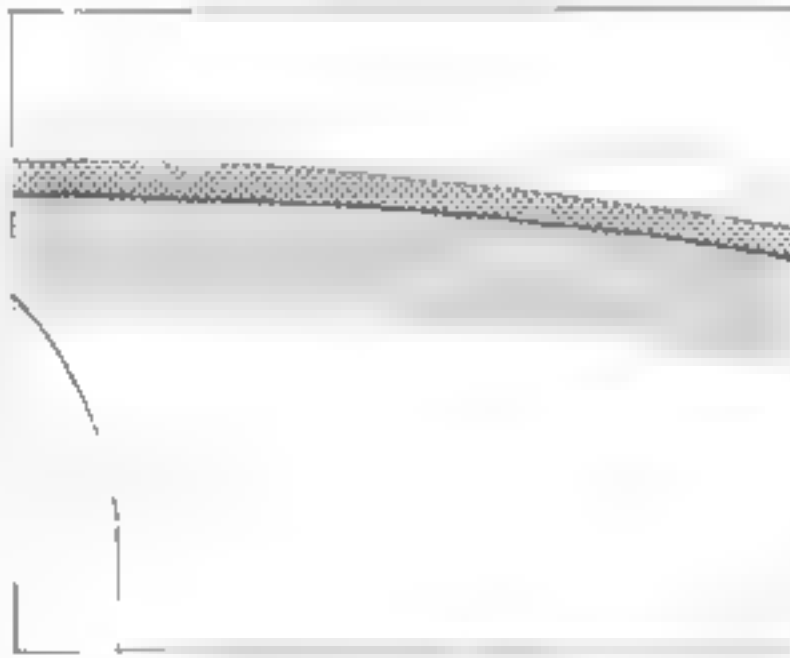
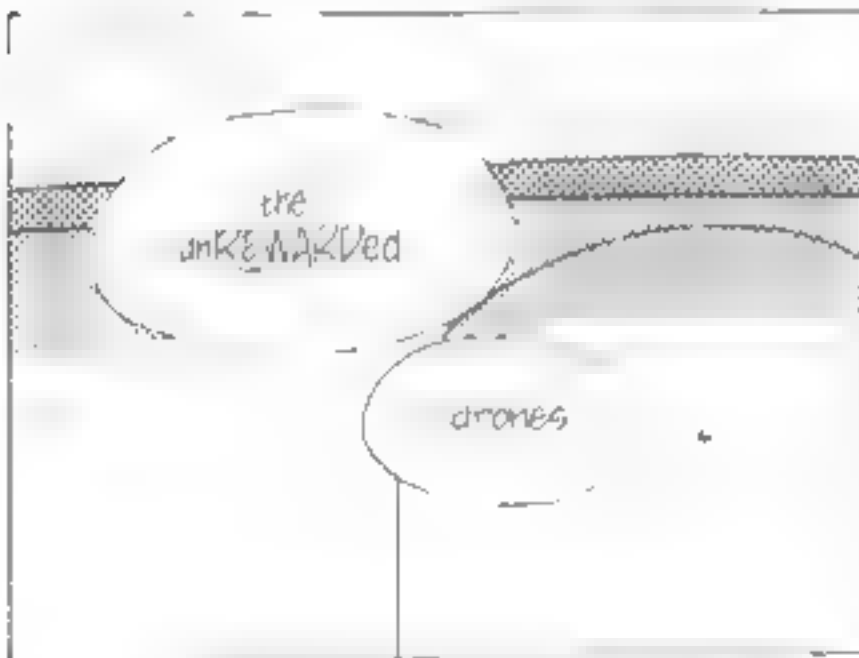
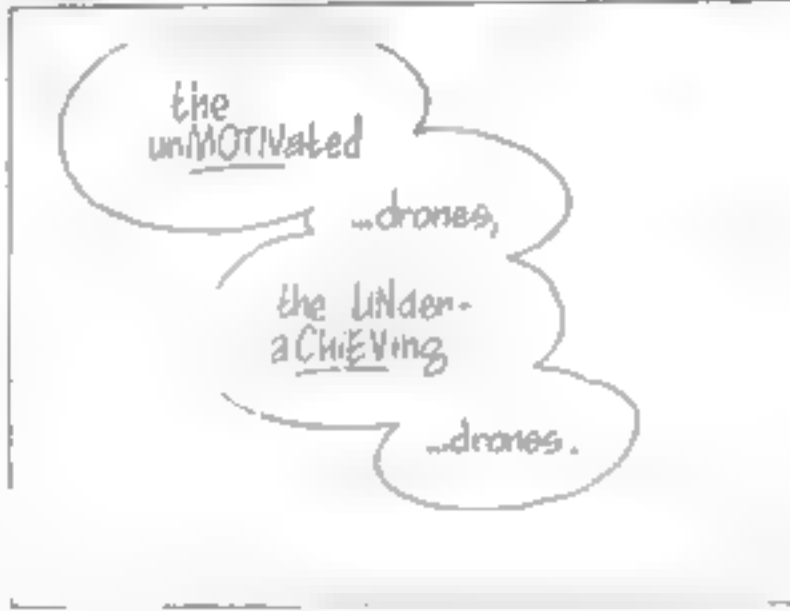
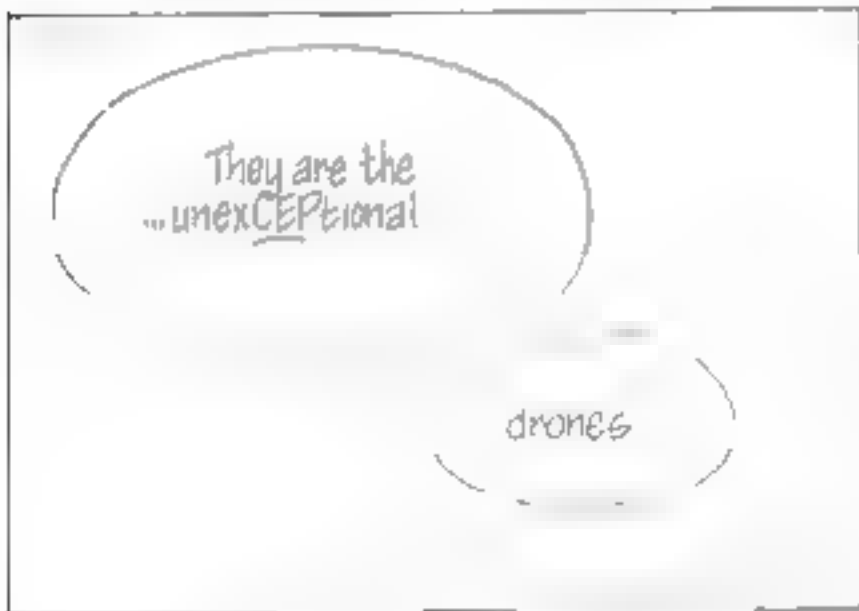
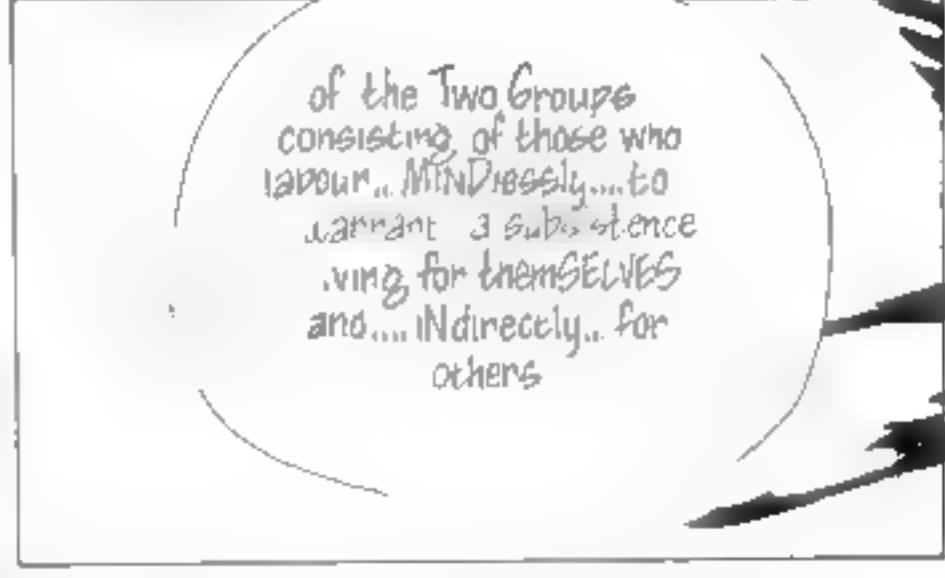
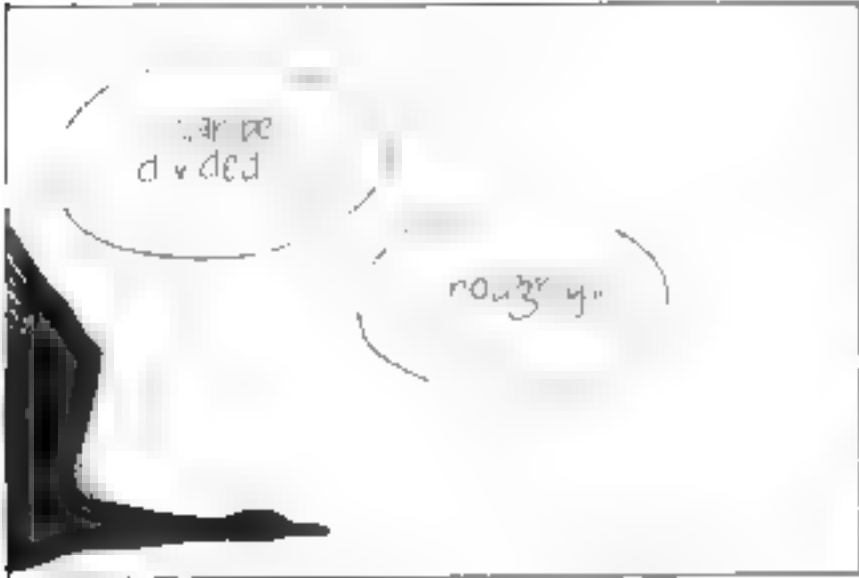
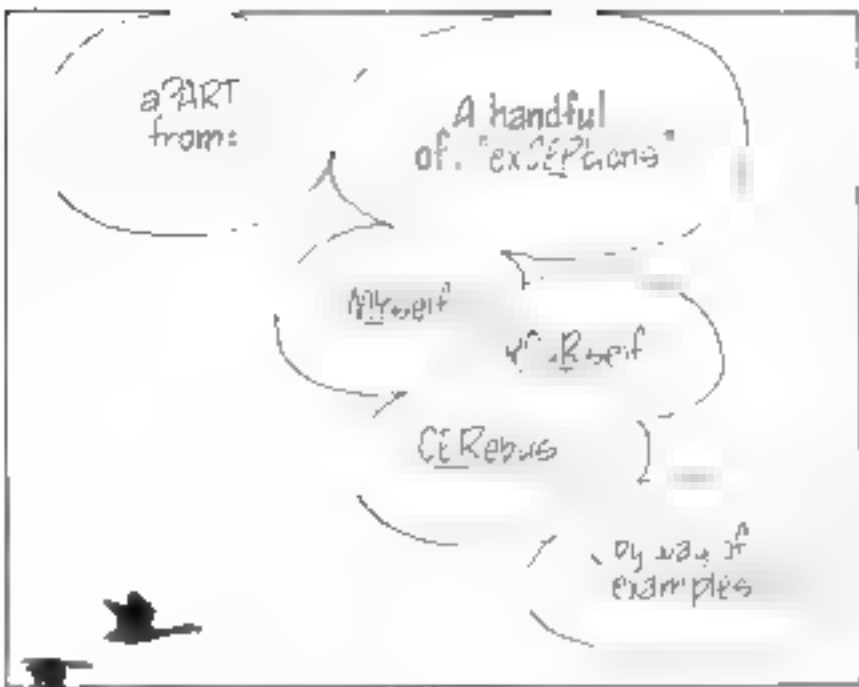


about  
YEARS  
more











In the  
"Rare" or  
"upper"  
"Strata"  
of this  
smaller  
group

are "rare"  
and who  
are  
tirelessly  
and efficiently

are perceived by  
the Matriarchal-  
Powers-That Be

to have  
made  
some

"Lasting" or  
"Significant"  
contribution to  
the "progress"  
of  
Matriarchal  
"Society".

are  
Your  
Majesty

Are  
NOT  
rewarded

Far

FAR  
from  
t

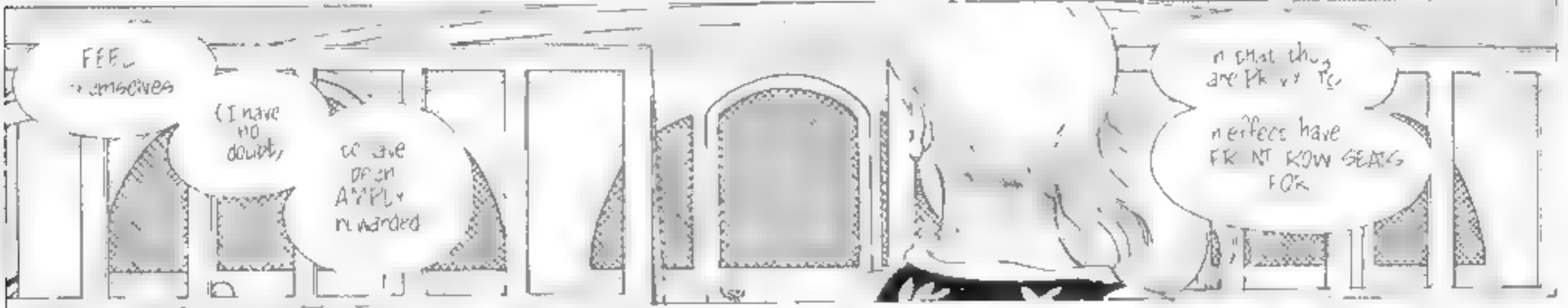
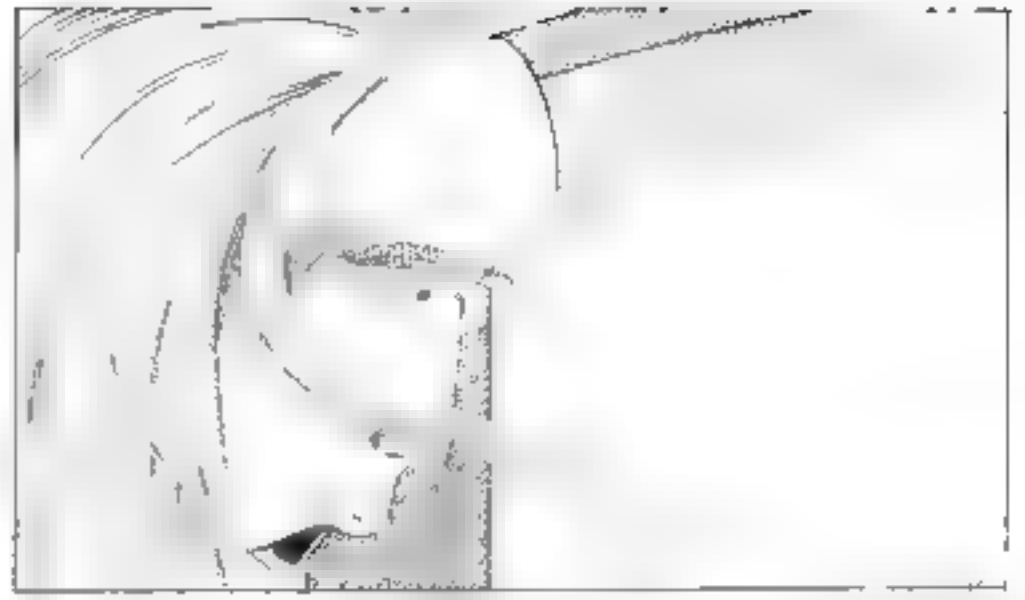
In fact, at this  
very MOMENT  
THREE such  
"Worthies"

in time  
small  
CADMS

Cunningly  
equipped with  
devices for the  
amplification  
of sound



BEHIND OSTENSIBLY  
OPAQUE SCREENS

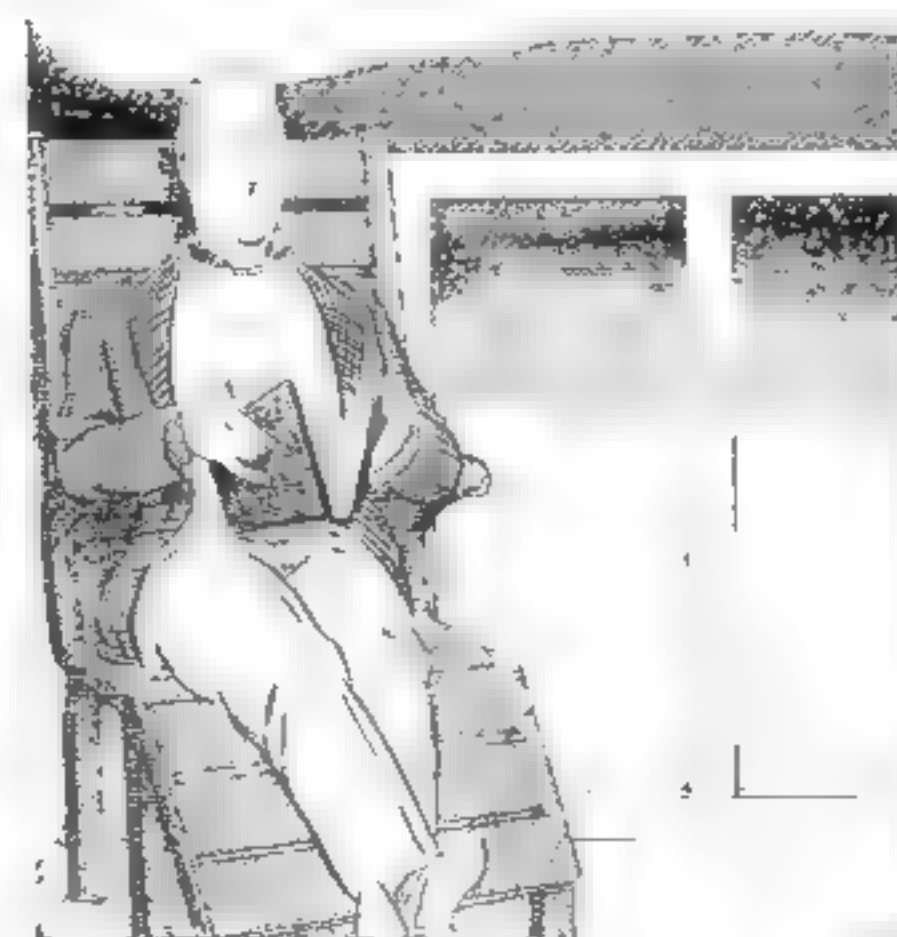
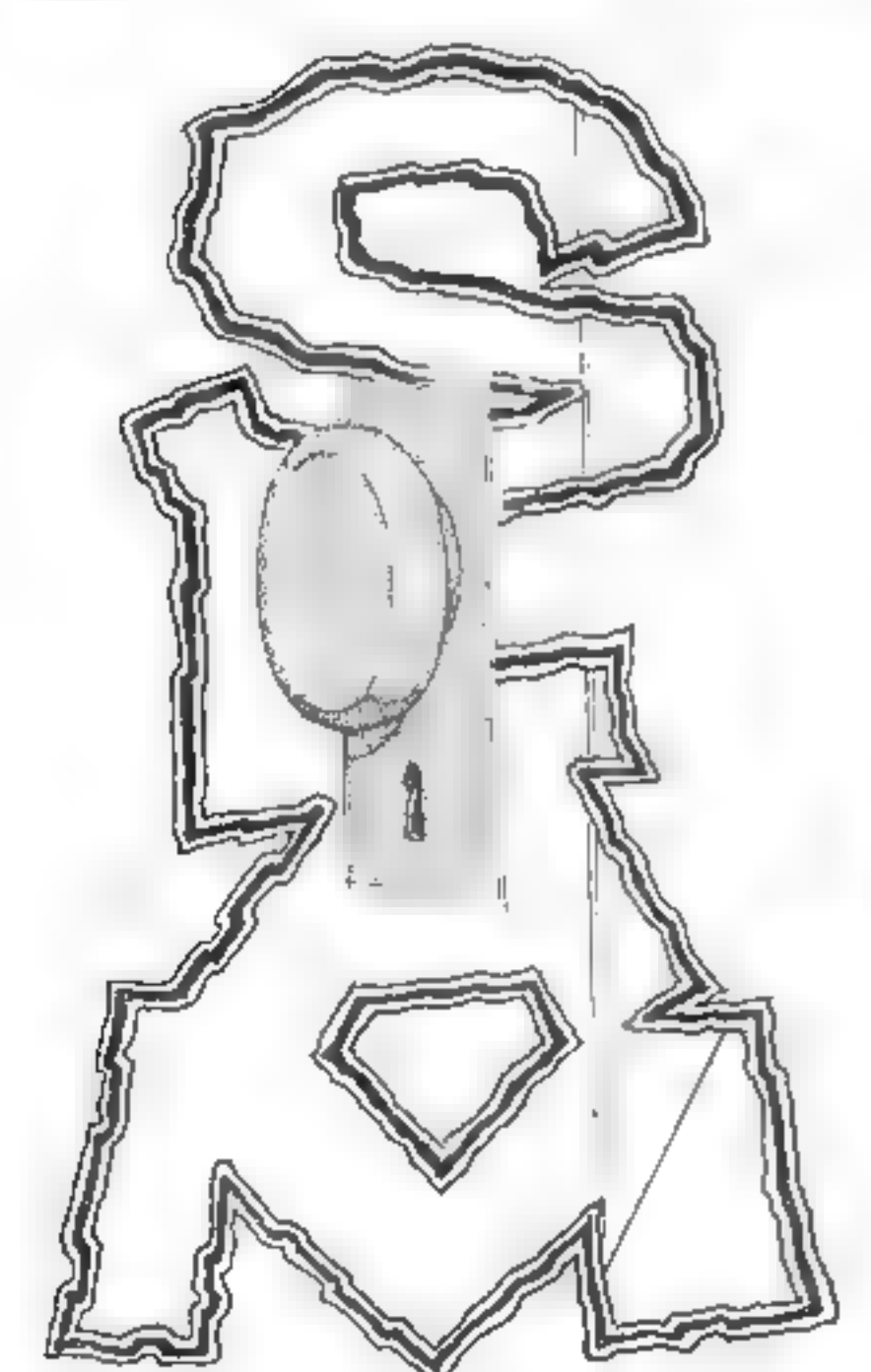
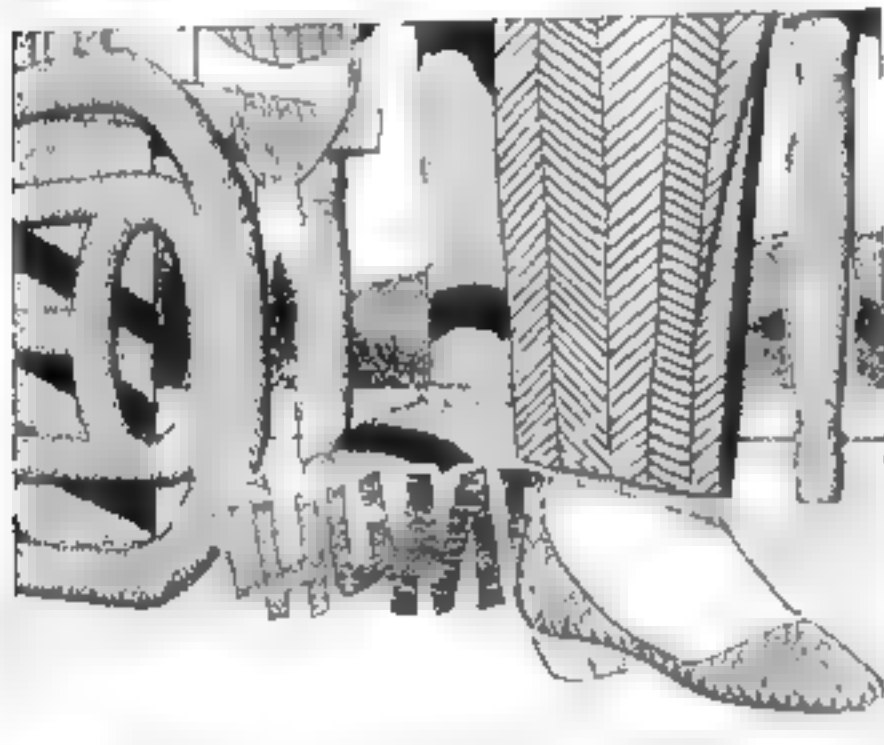
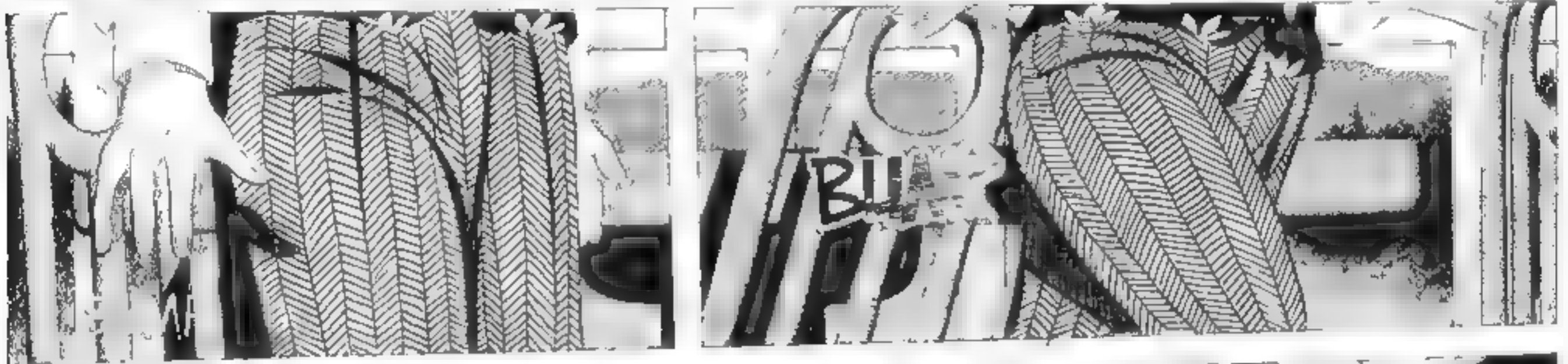


FEEL  
THINGS

(I have  
NO  
DOUBT,

we have  
OPEN  
APPLY  
REWARDED

in that they  
are PK vs TC  
perfect have  
FR NT KOW SEAS  
FOR





row seats for the...quite possibly...momentous intersection of two lives. Two lives which *are* — unlike their own — of interest to them; two lives which *are* — more significantly and, no doubt, more insidiously — of interest to every woman they know: from their most intimate confidants to their most transitory acquaintances. At the conclusion of our luxurious passage, having discharged their obligatory servitude, they will hasten homeward and hearthward to confidant and acquaintance...”

The Princess reared back as if struck a physical blow, her eyes fixed upon those three implacable, inscrutable screens peering indiscreetly above the apron of the rearmost deck. Jay Anthony's words came to her now as if from some distant and dreadful land.

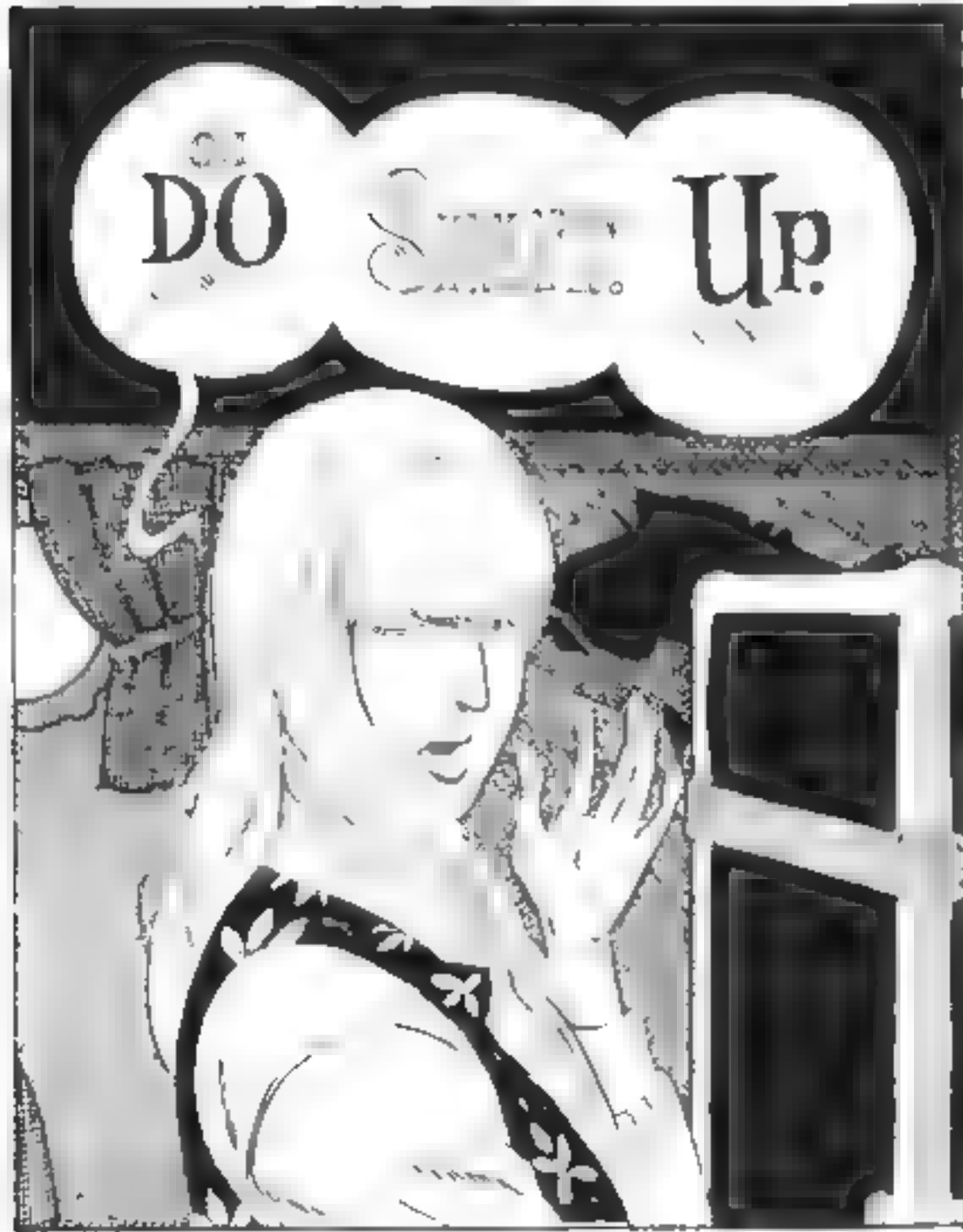
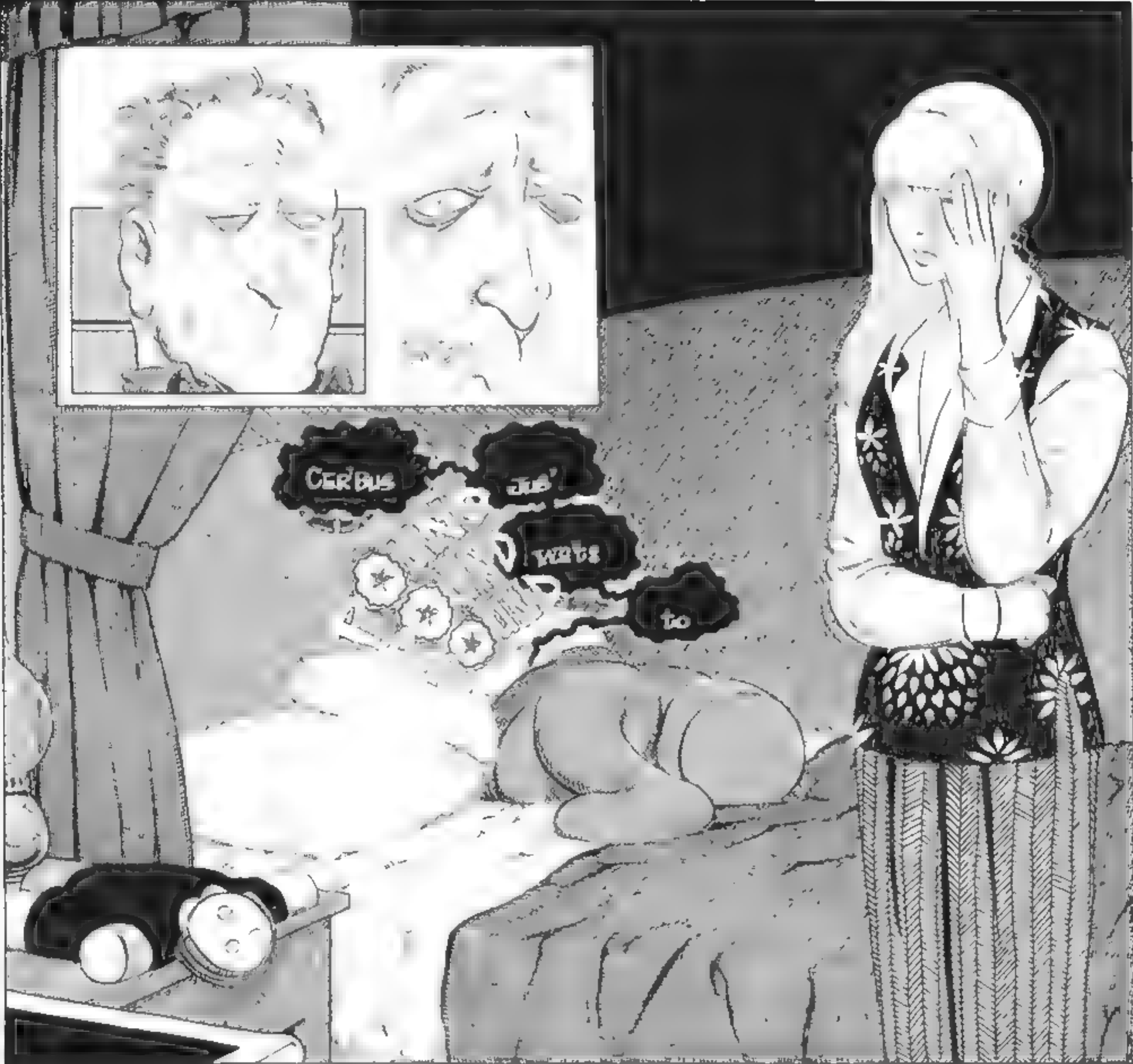
“...there to ‘spend,’ like drunken sailors, the compensations of their good and faithful service — the only currencies of weight and of substance in our possessionless matriarchal society...”

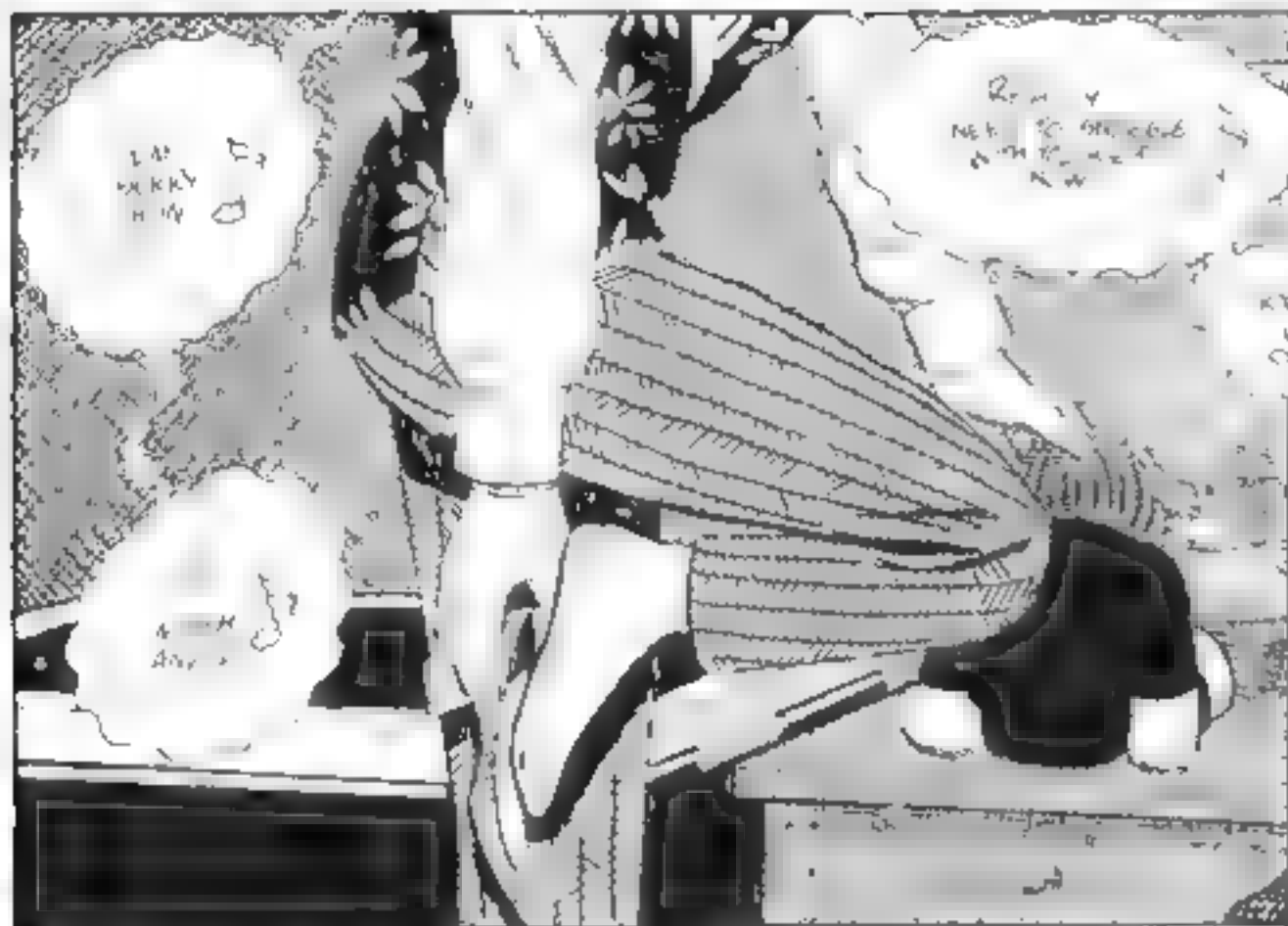
Ginevra had scuttled back to her stateroom like some ignominious and panic-stricken sand crab, amputating Jay Anthony's concluding remark with a door slam.

“...the private lives of the beautiful...” he murmured to himself, “...and of the damned.”

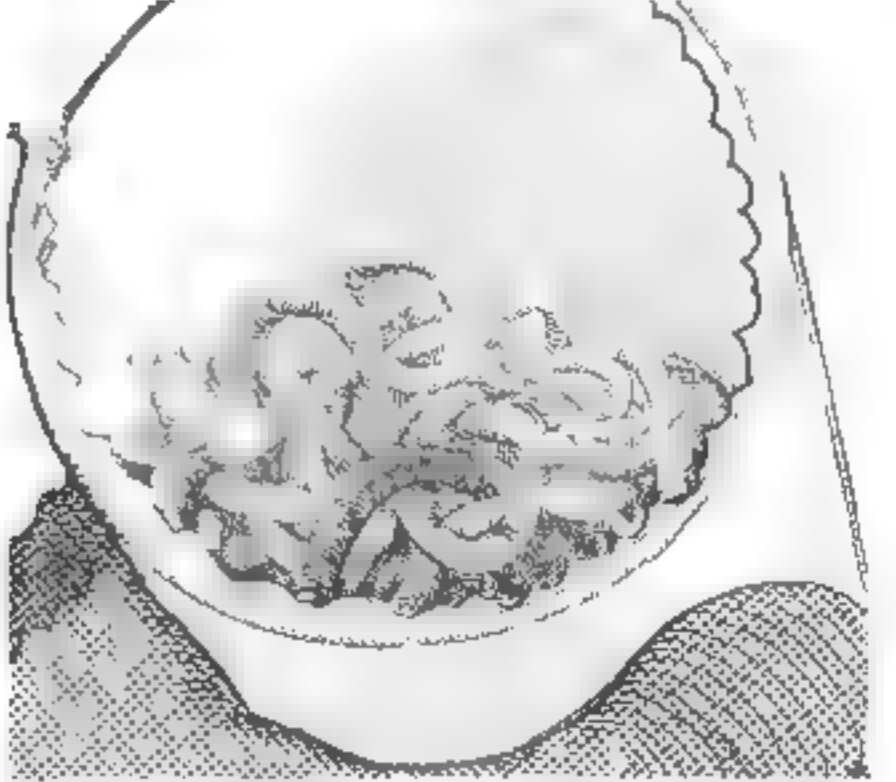
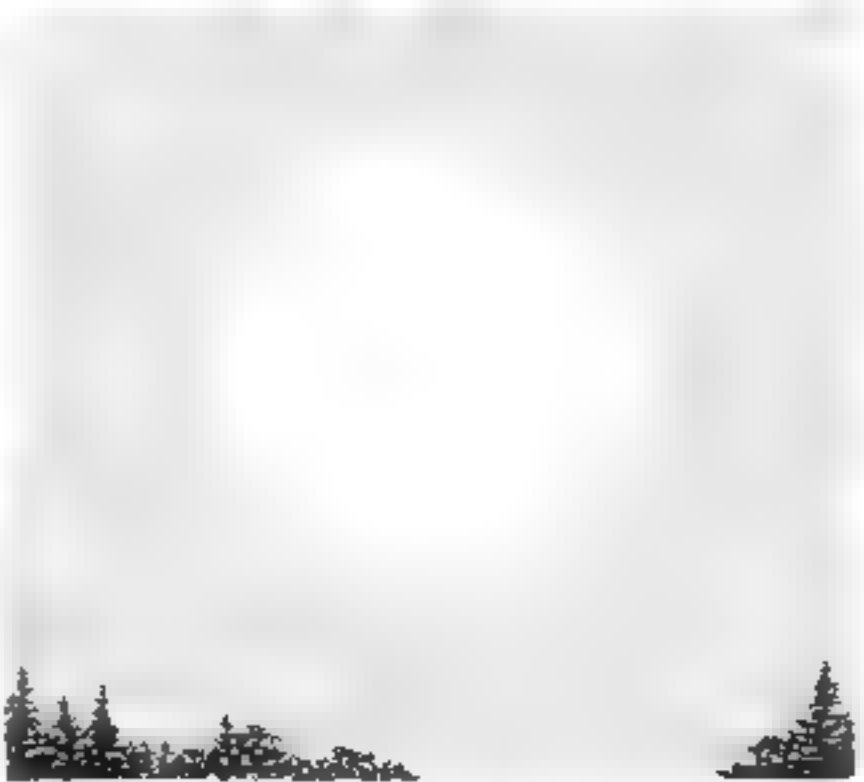
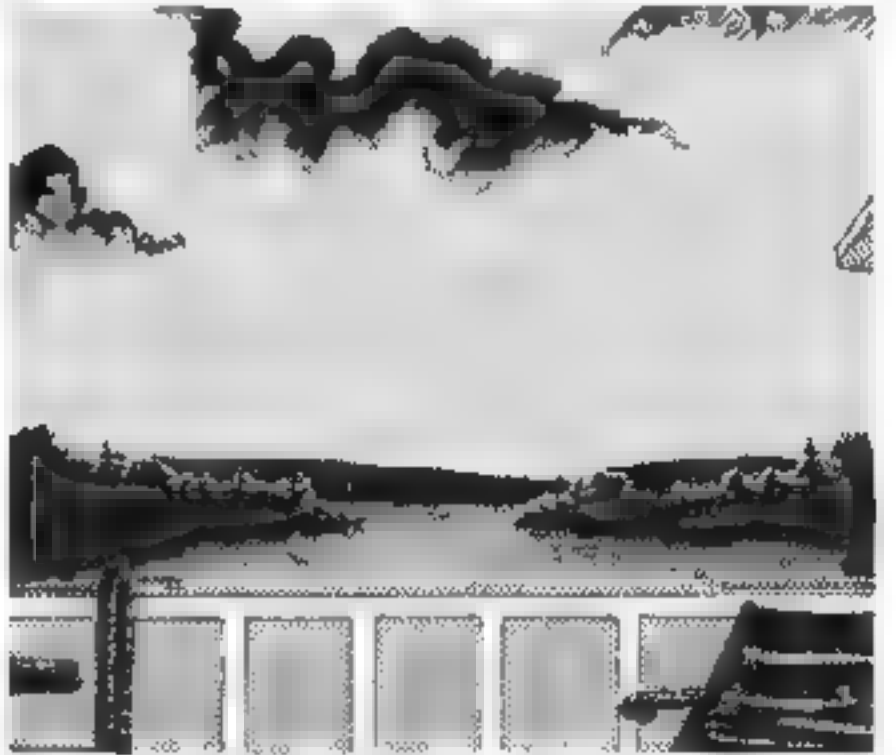
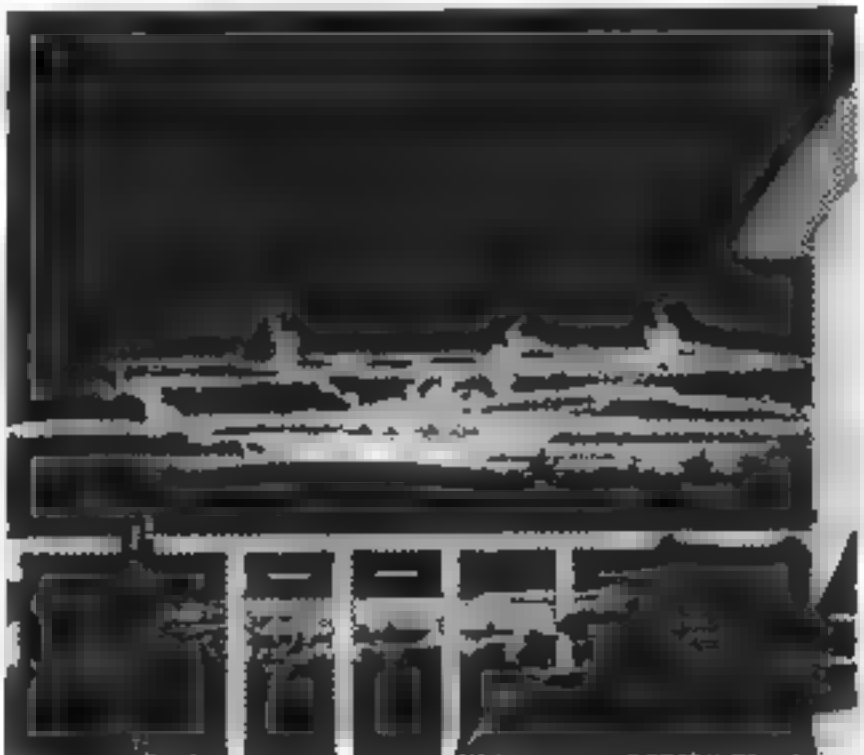
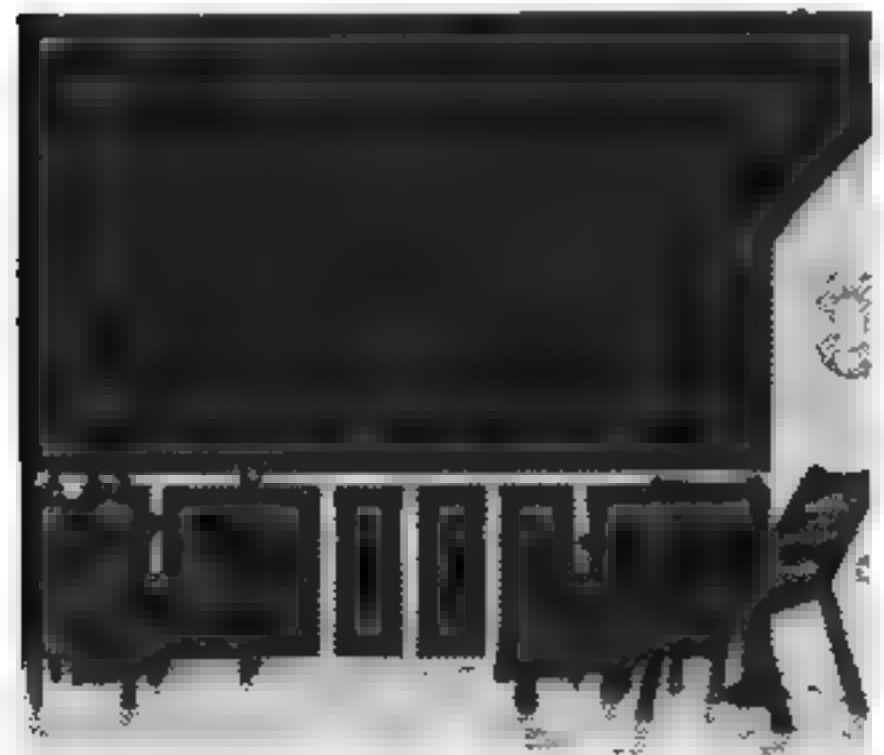
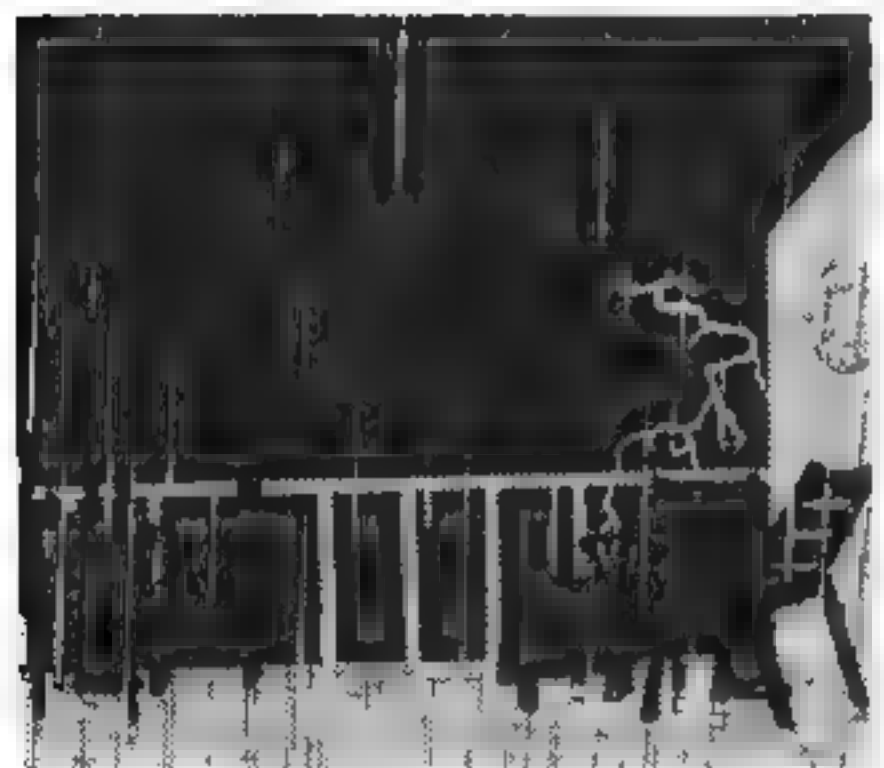
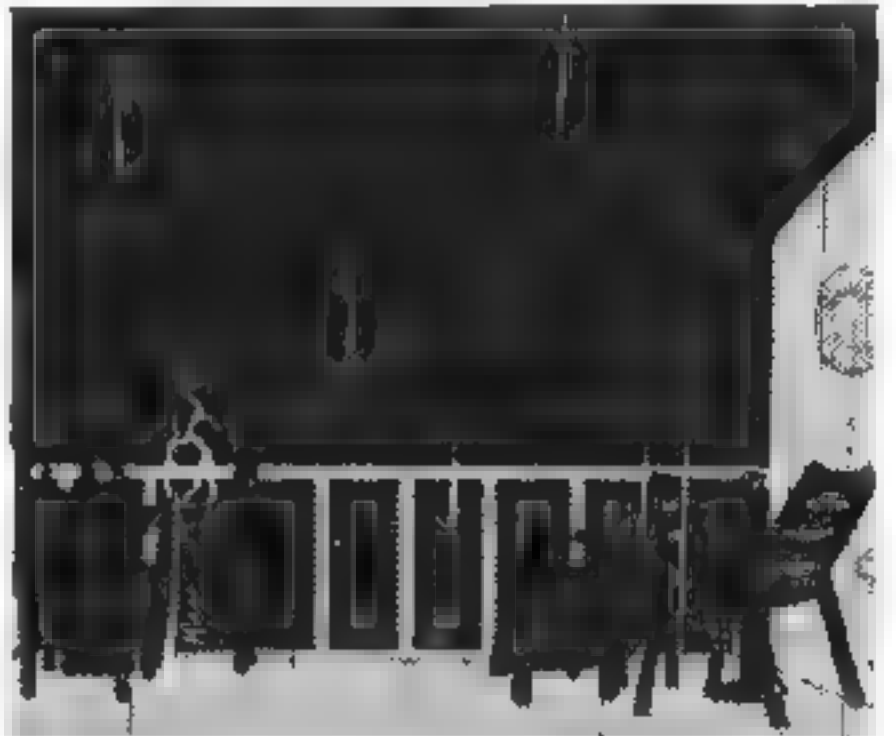
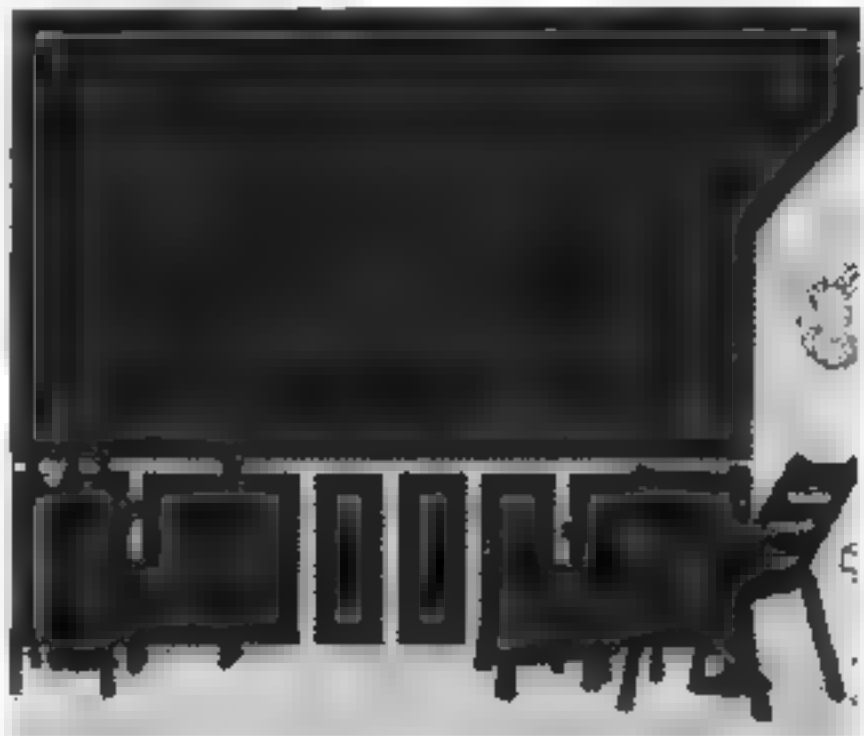
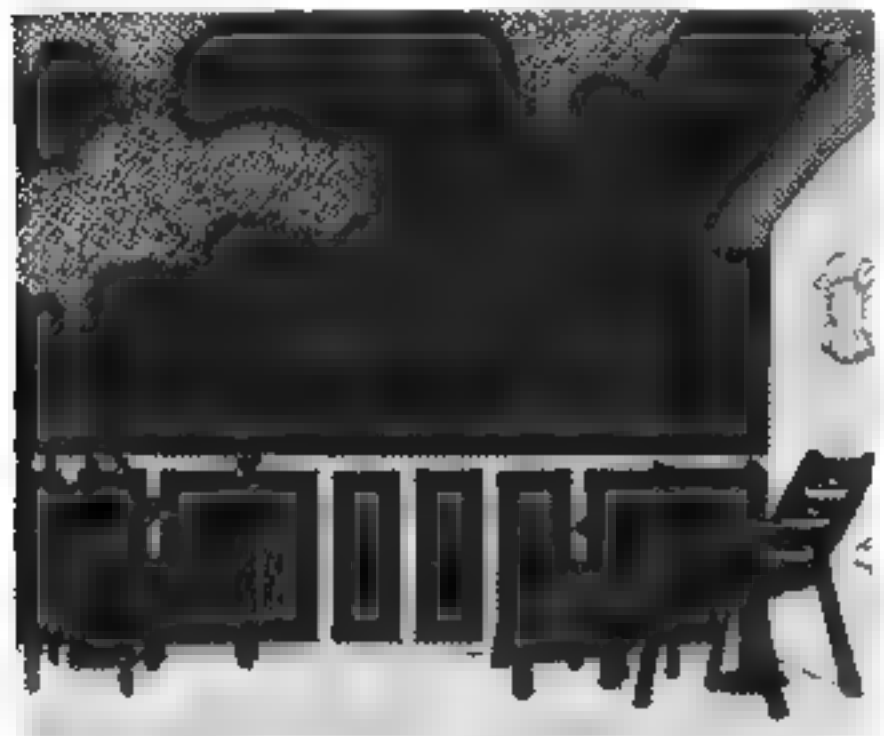
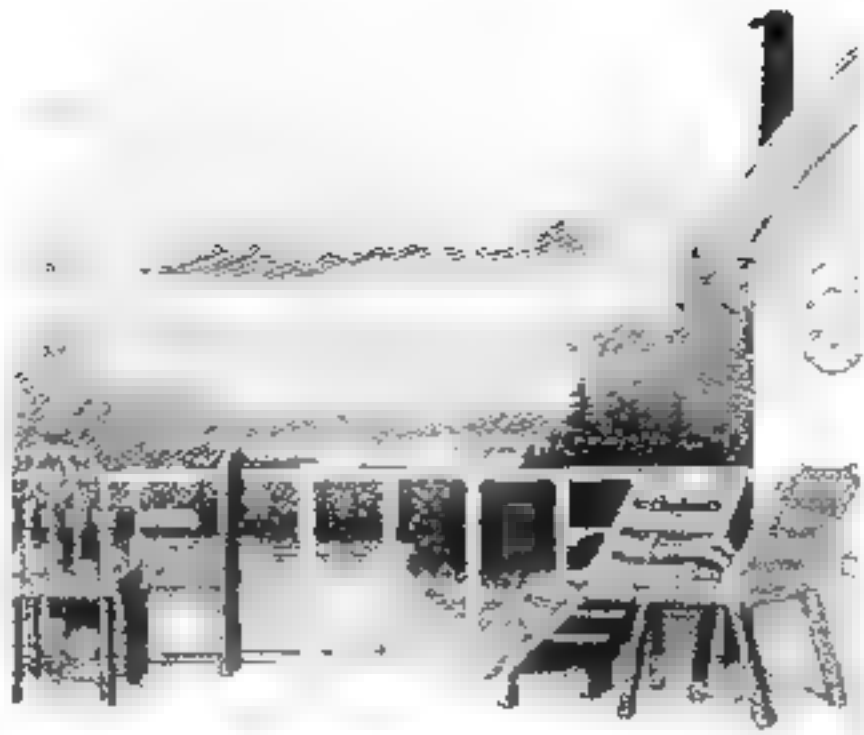
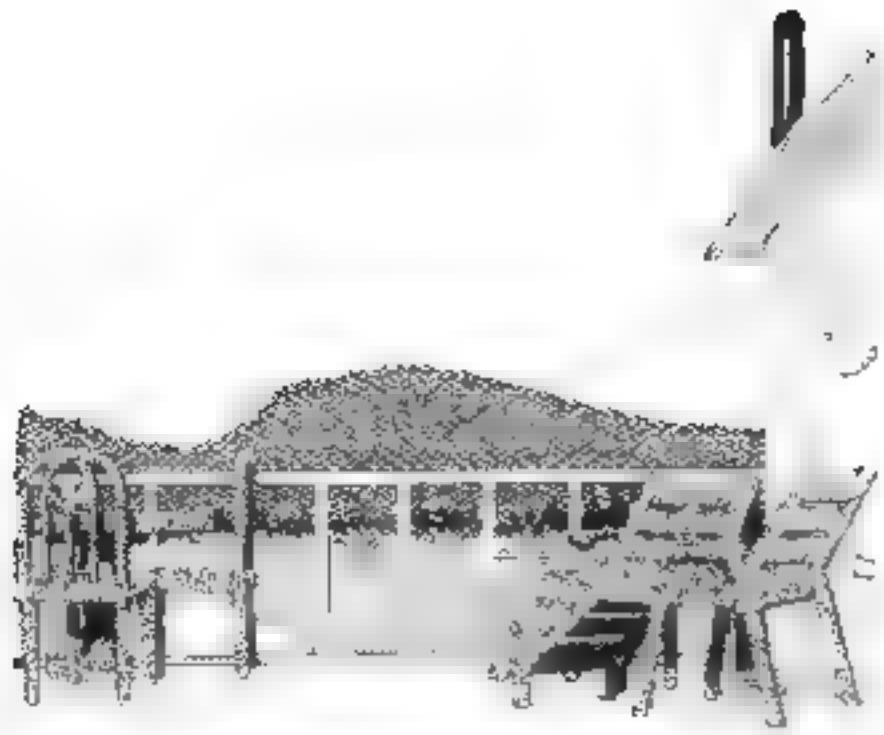
### CONSEQUENCE

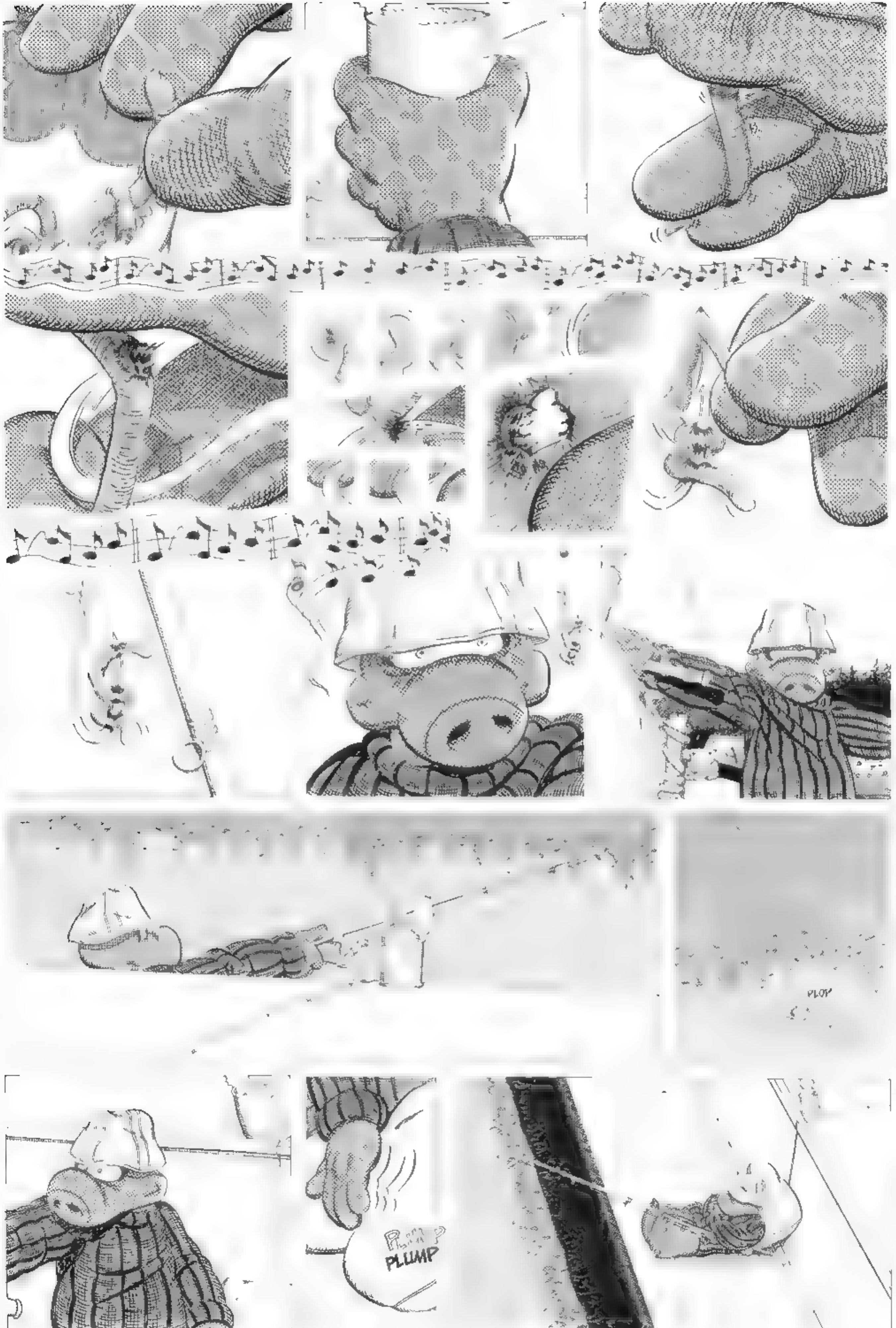
“His increasing carelessness about himself”? Jay Anthony Diver marvelled at how precipitously that carelessness — through the course of a soliloquy which had lasted mere moments — had eroded into suicidal recklessness. He now possessed, of a certainty, the undivided attentions of those implacable, inscrutable screens. But — even at the greatest elevation of his inward vanity — he could in no wise delude himself that, in the hearts and minds of his largely illiterate auditors, he was judged a fitting substitute for the beloved “Princess of the People.” What if Ginevra elected to remain with Jozan in her stateroom for the balance of the voyage? What if Jay Anthony Diver was to be left alone in his captured spotlight, having chased *la prima donna di tutti prima donnas* from the barge's “stage”?

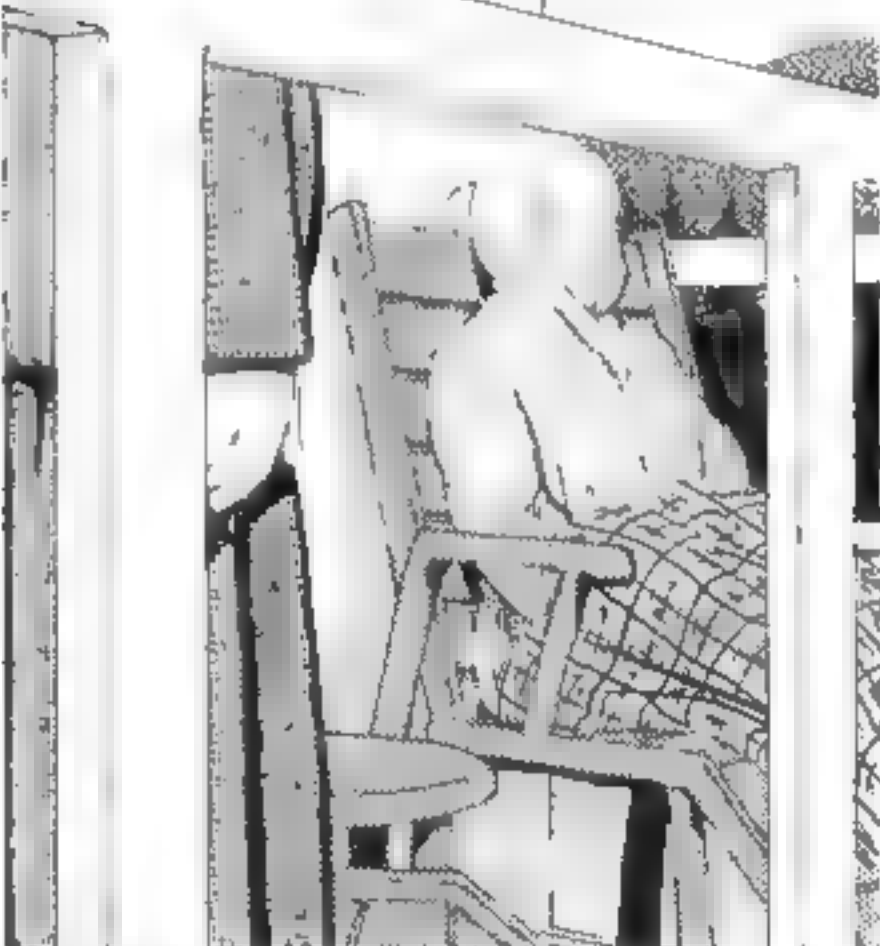
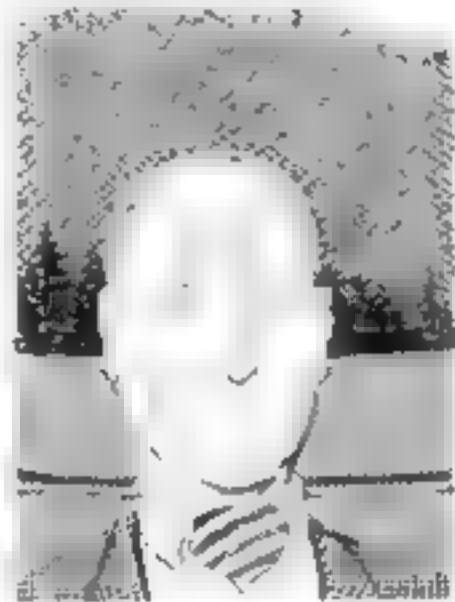
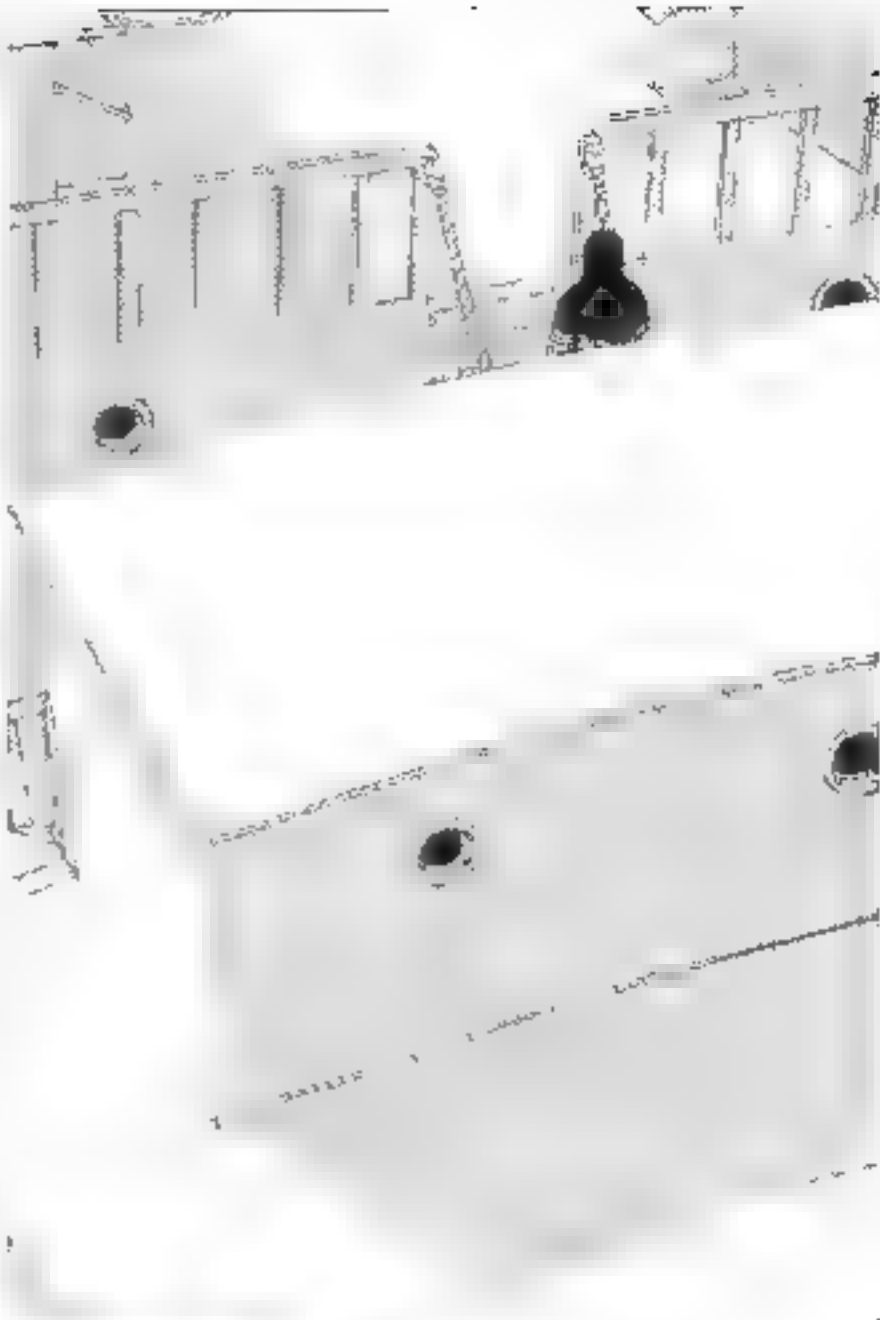
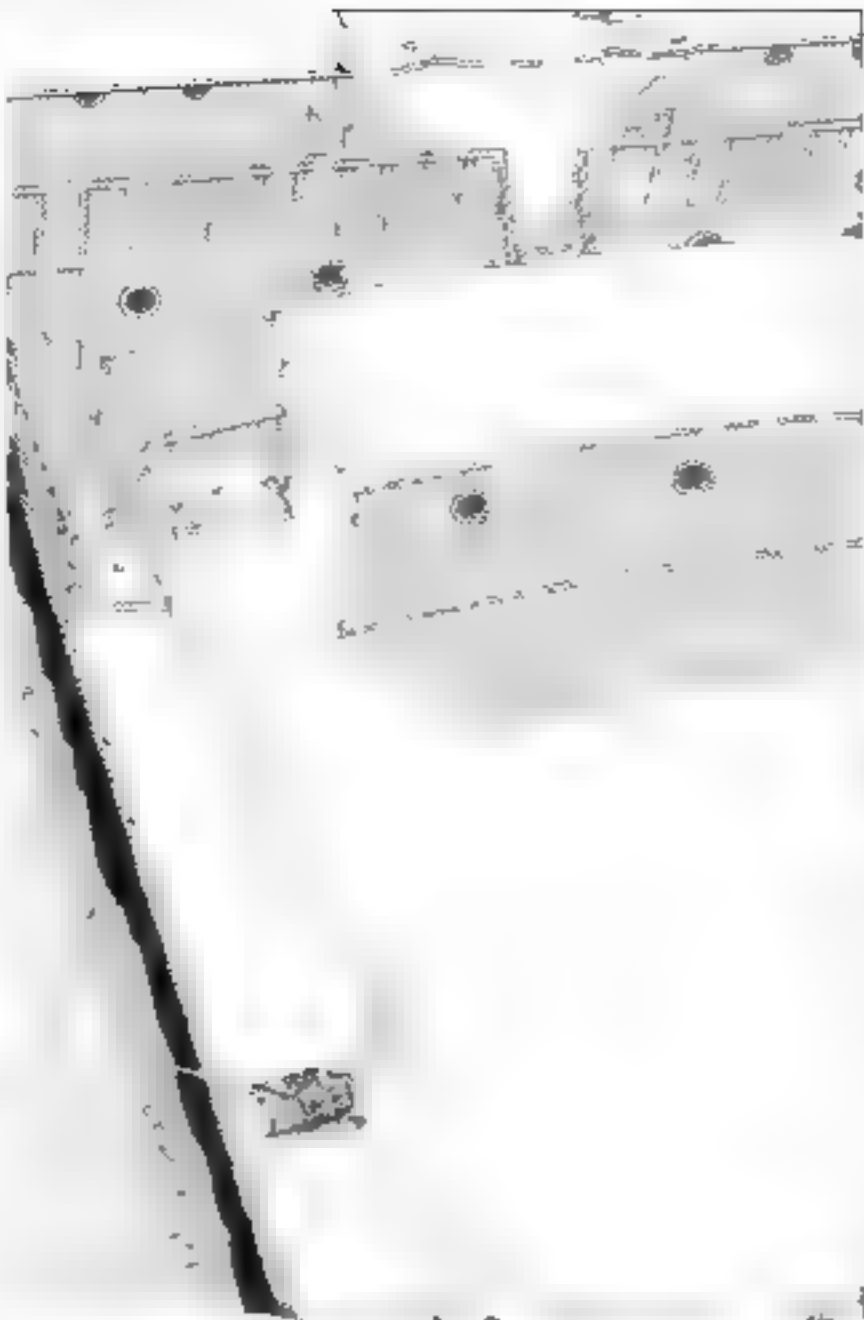




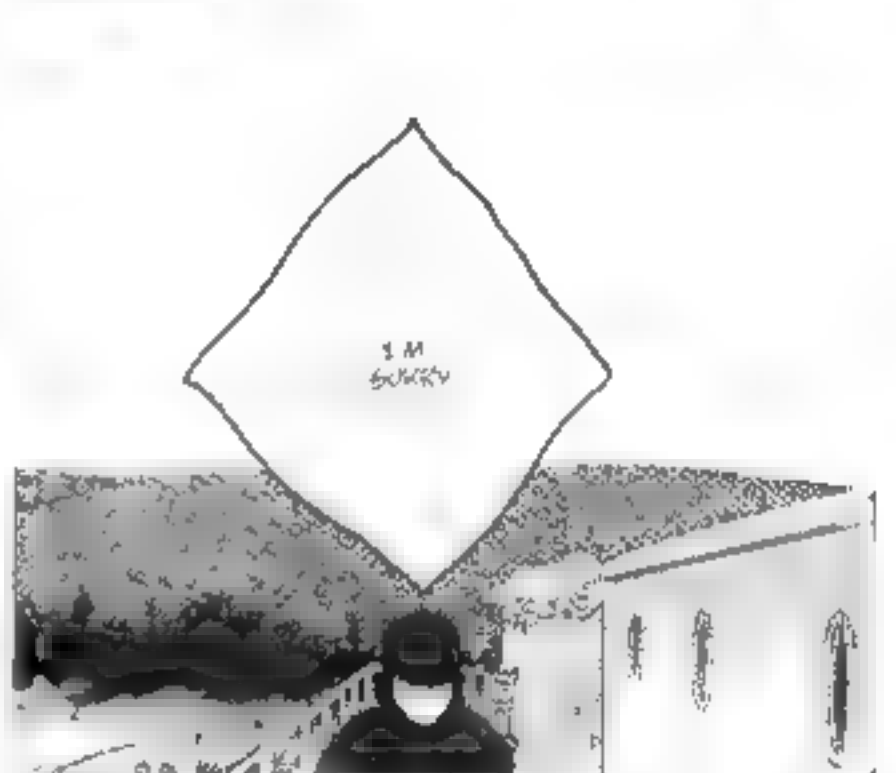
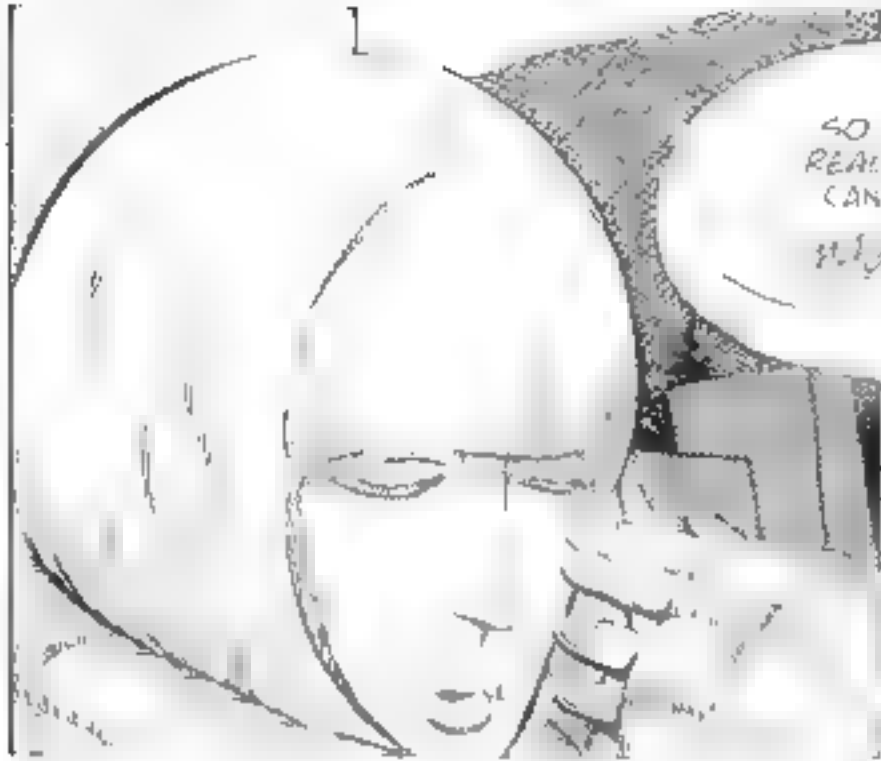
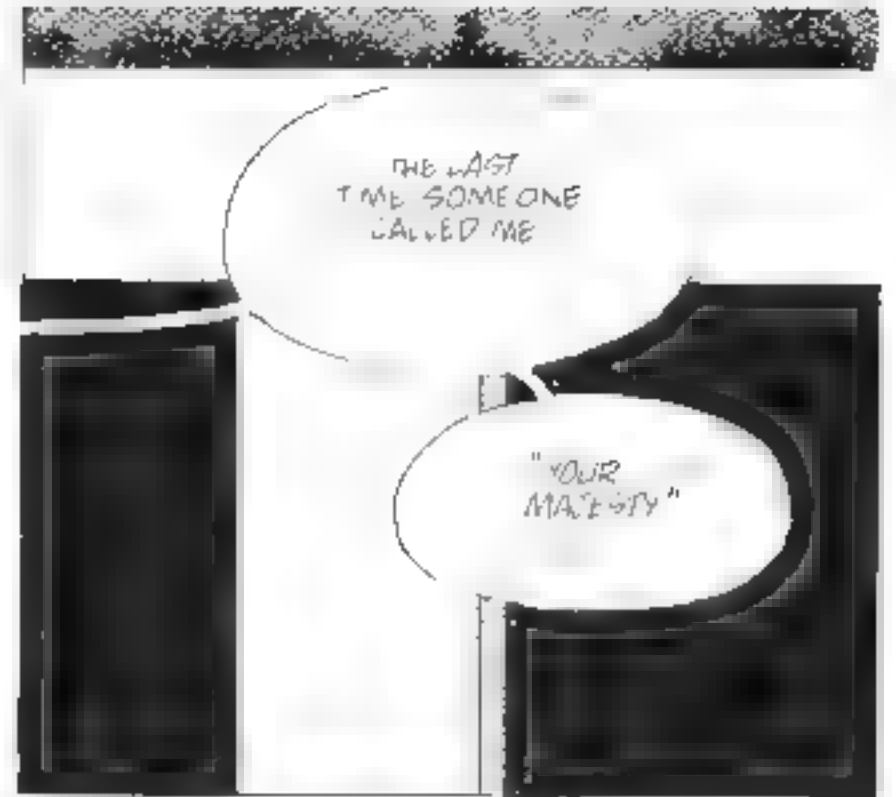
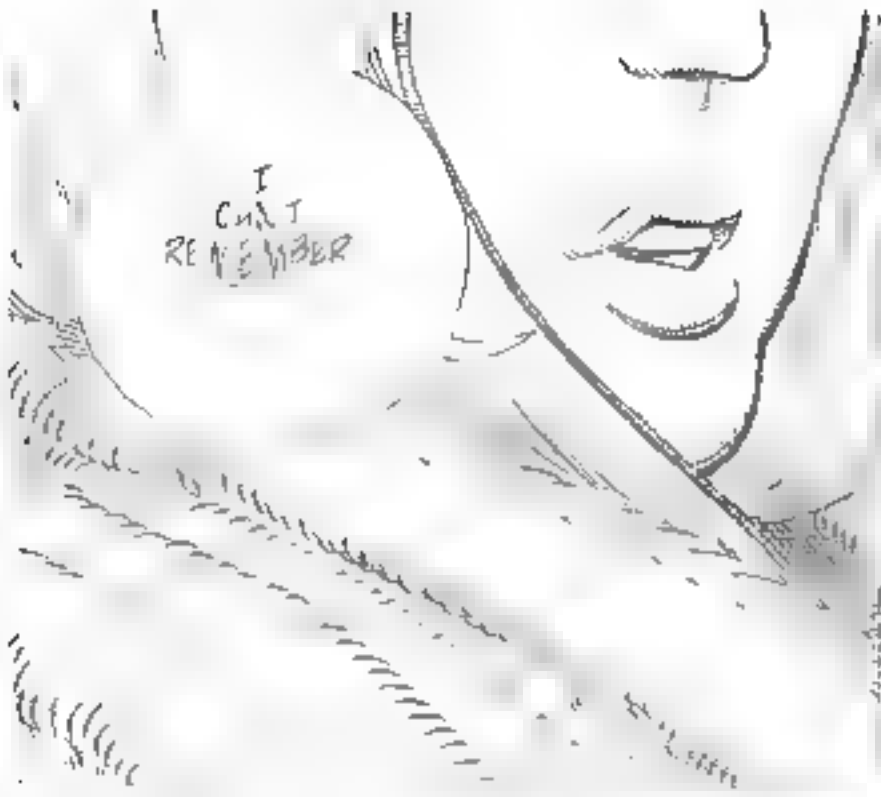


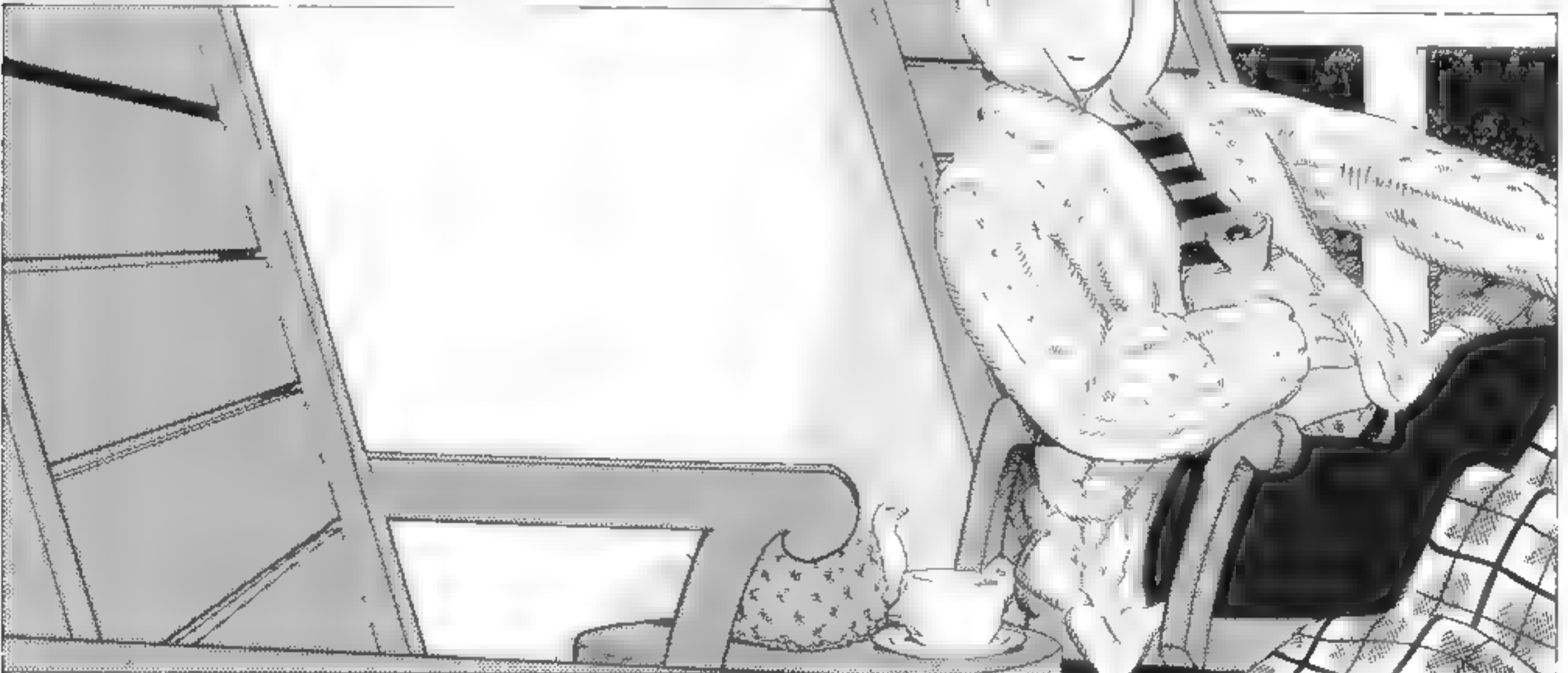
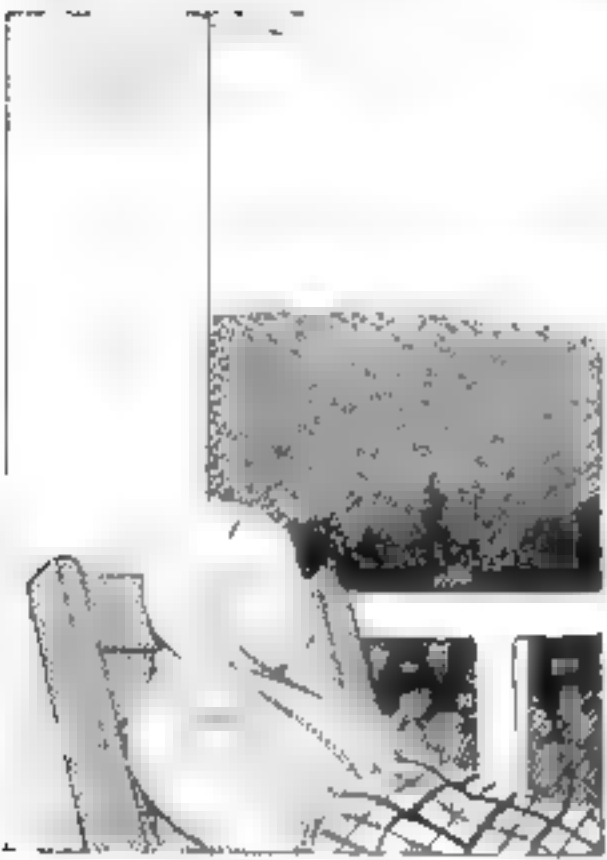
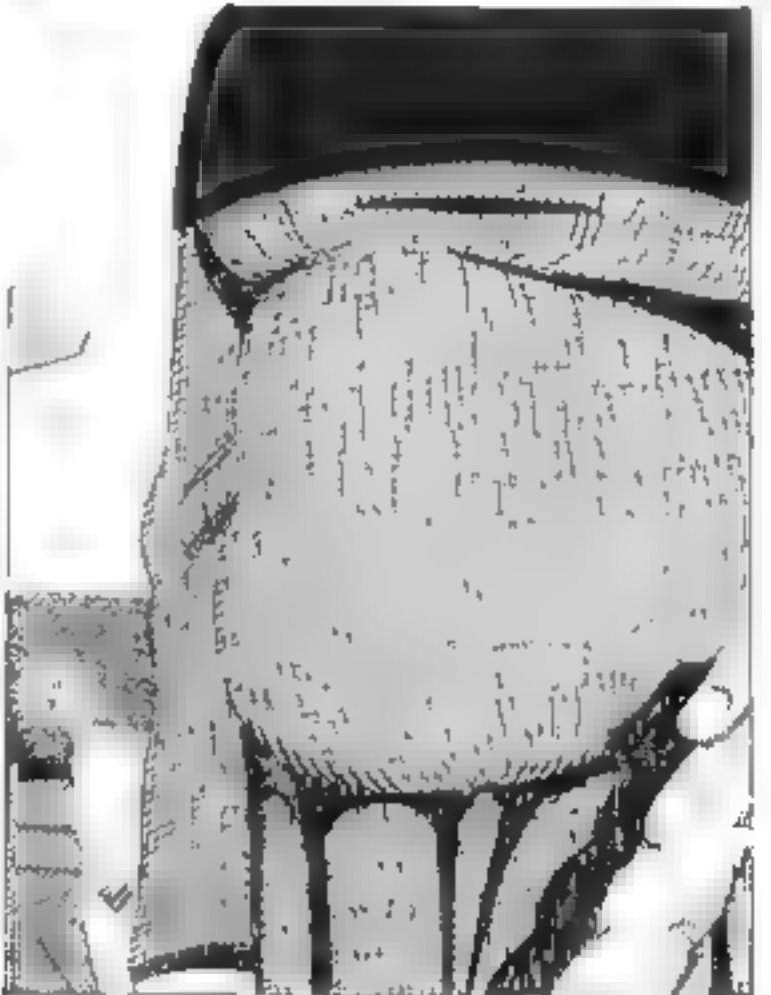
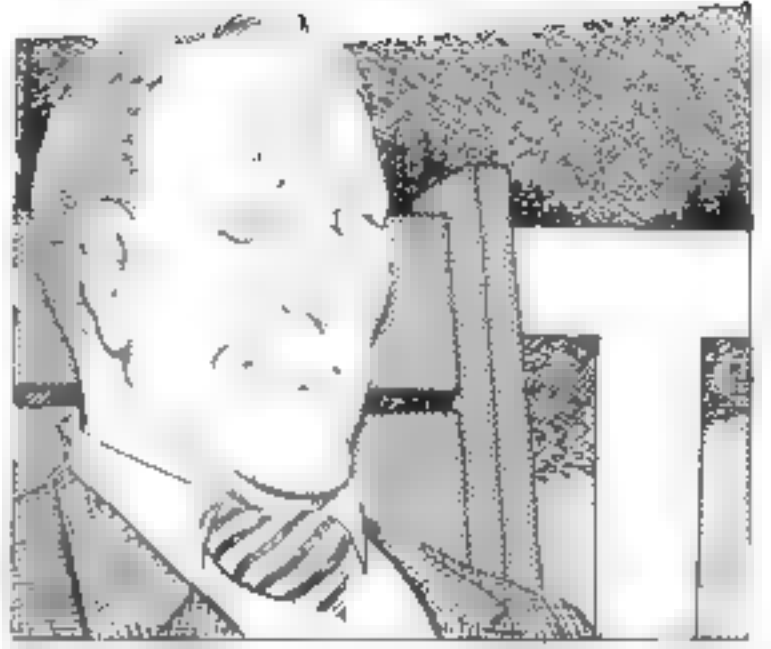
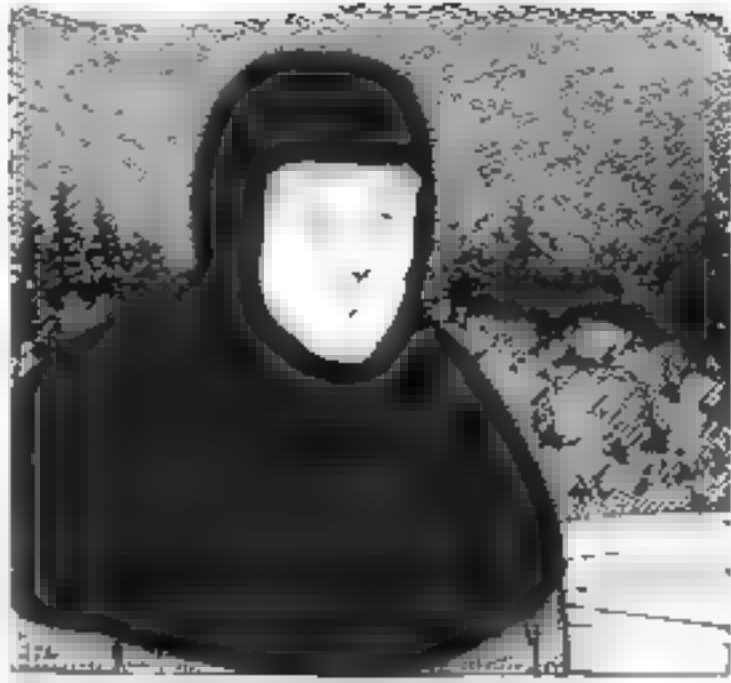




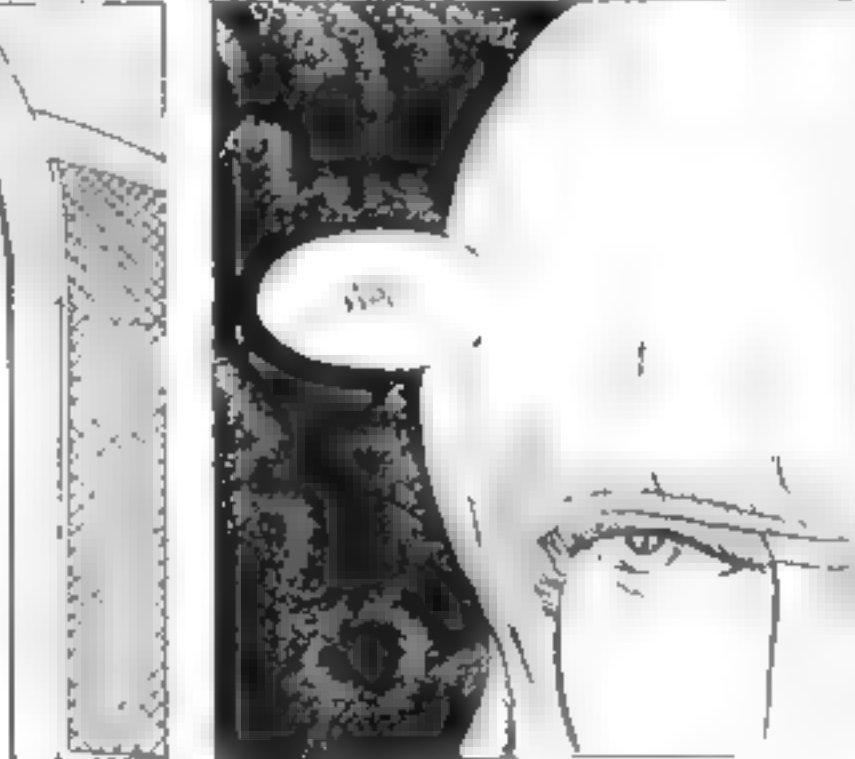
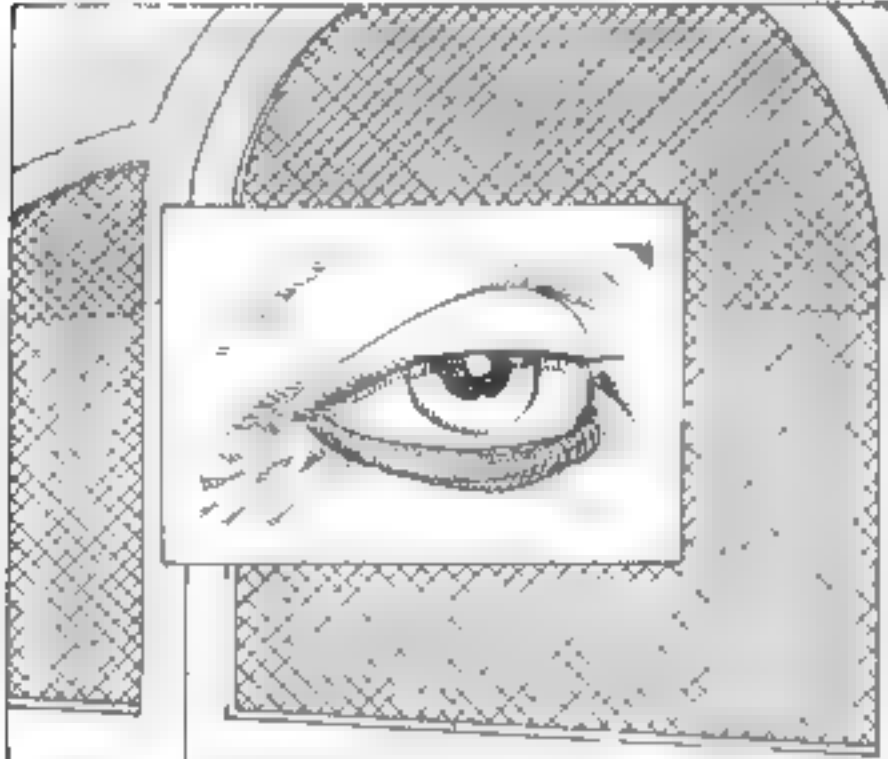
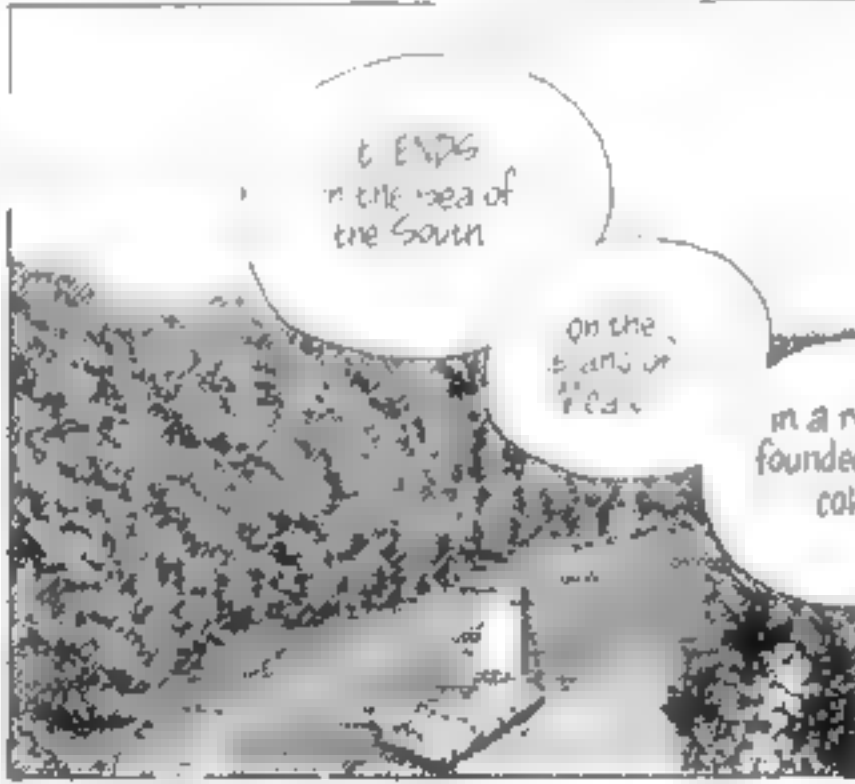
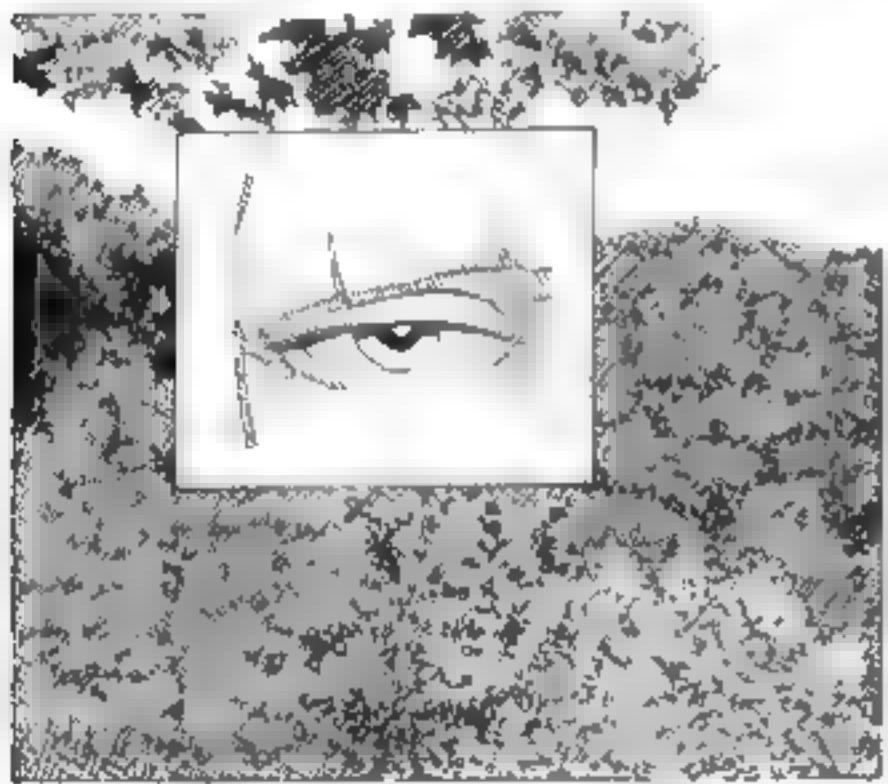
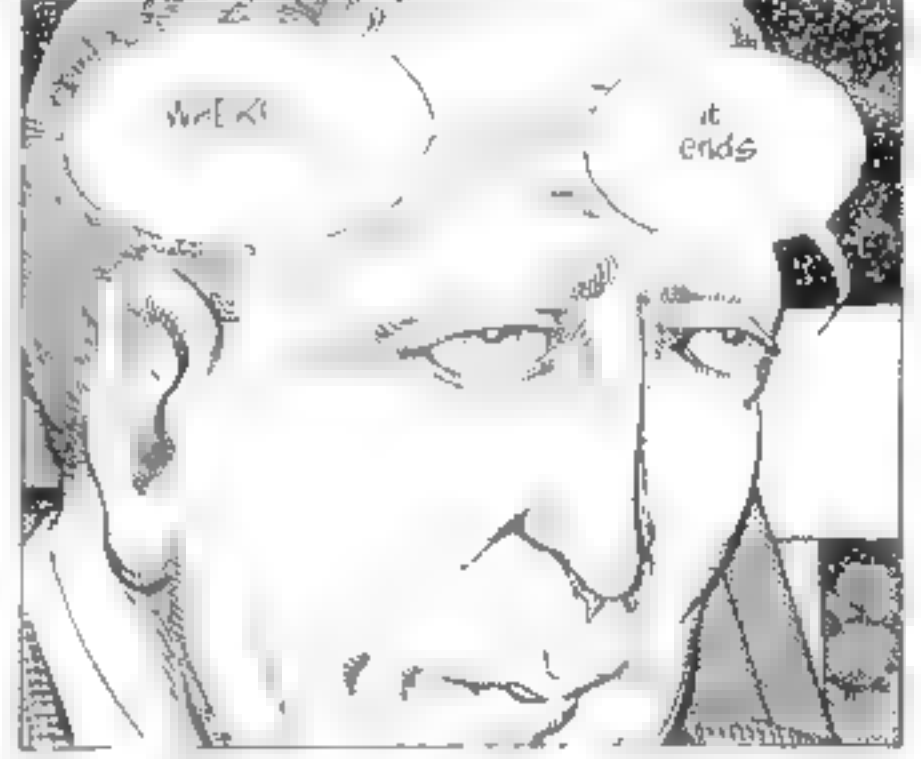
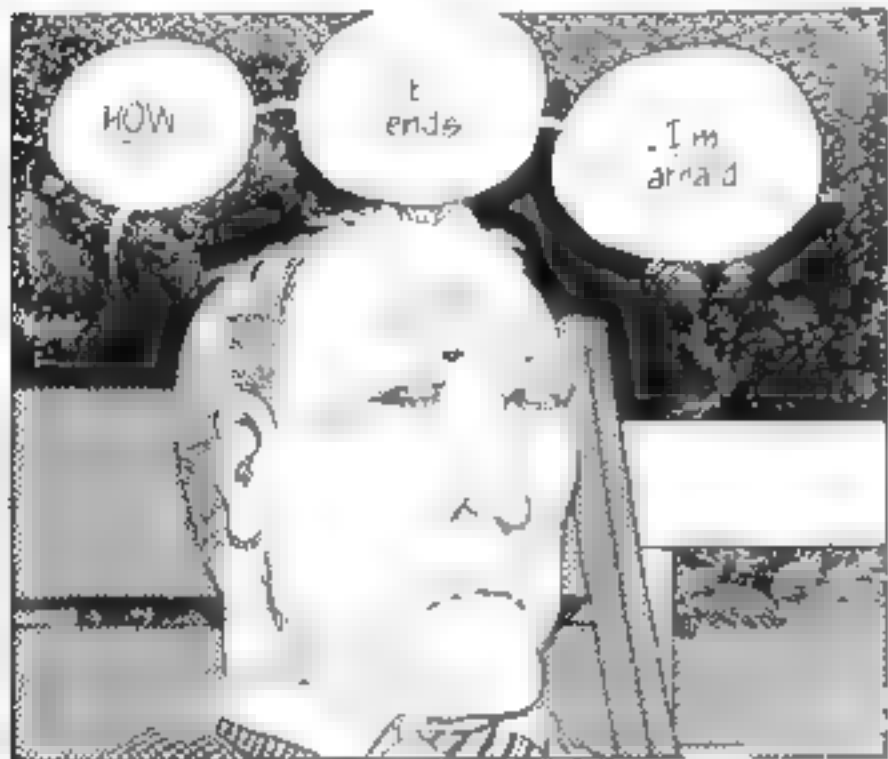
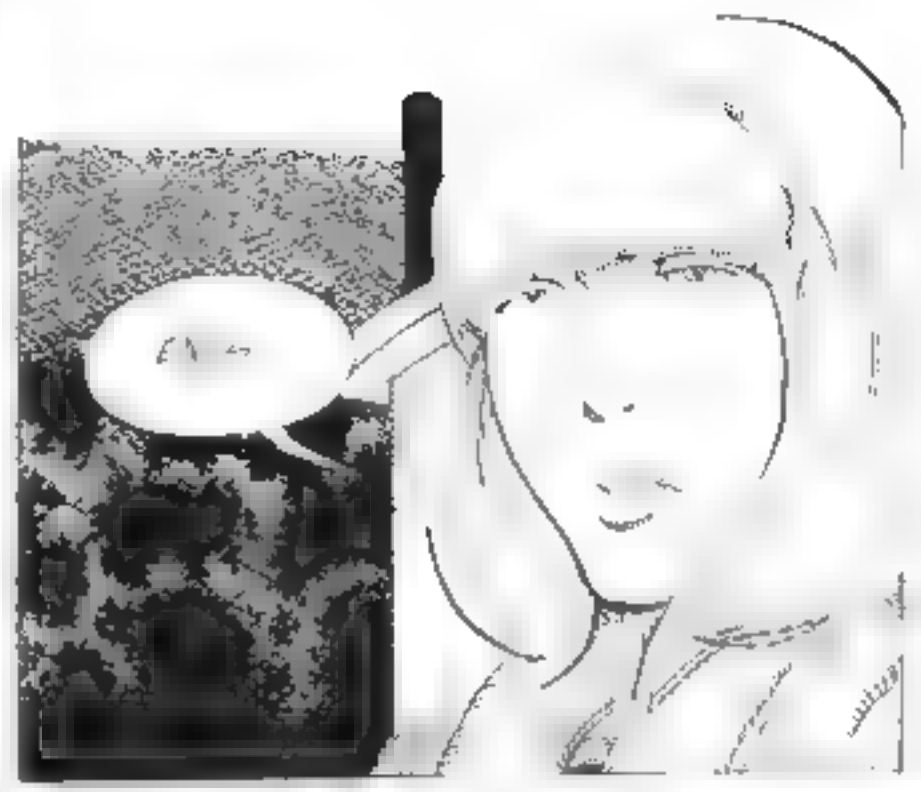
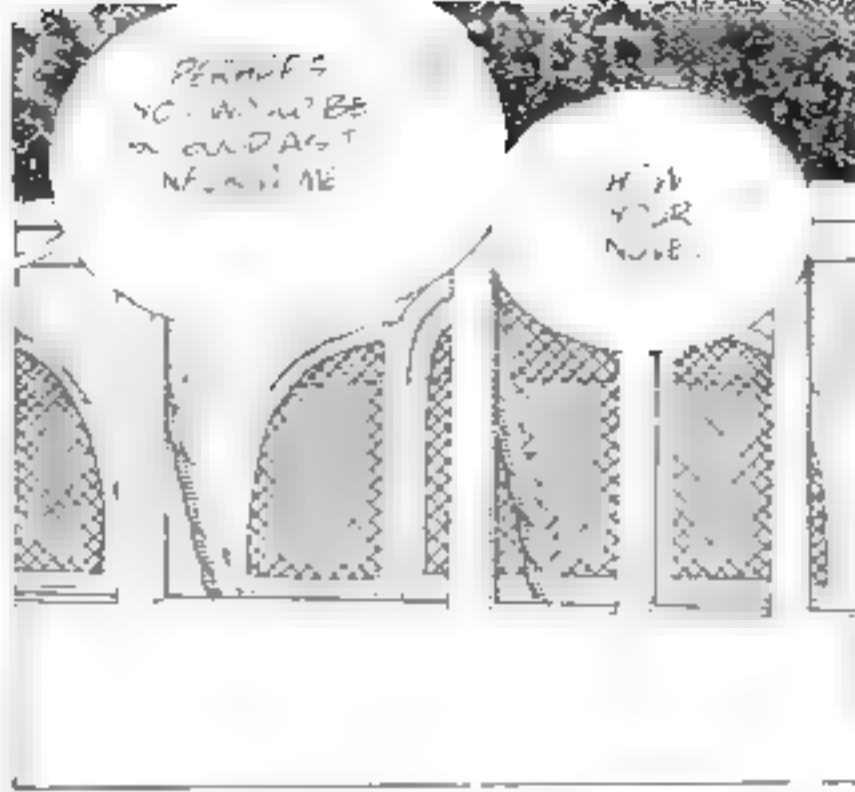
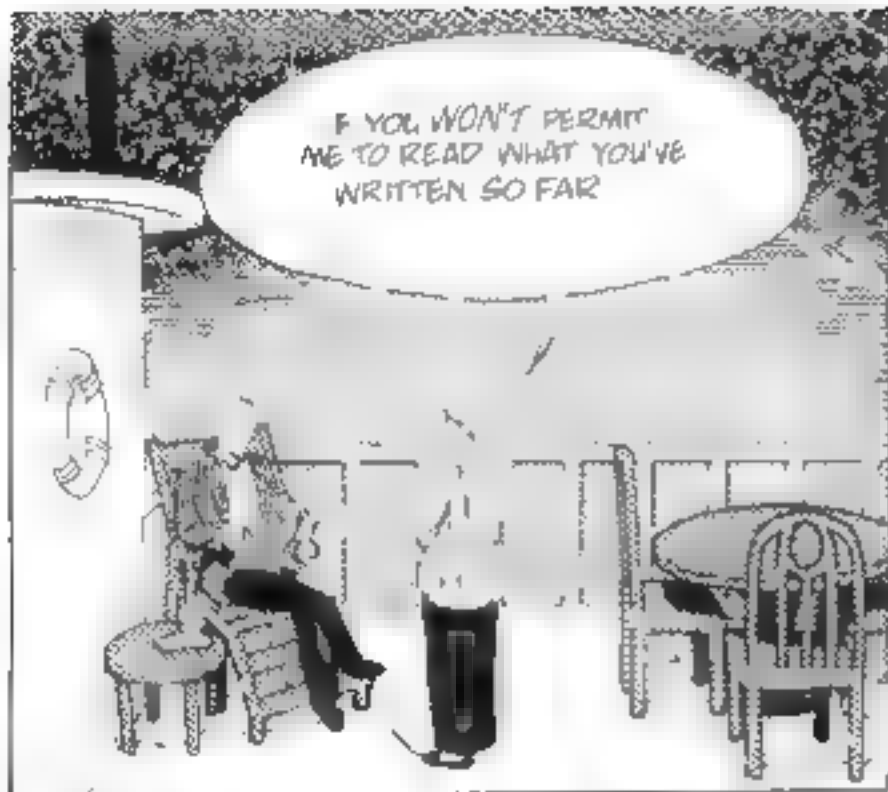














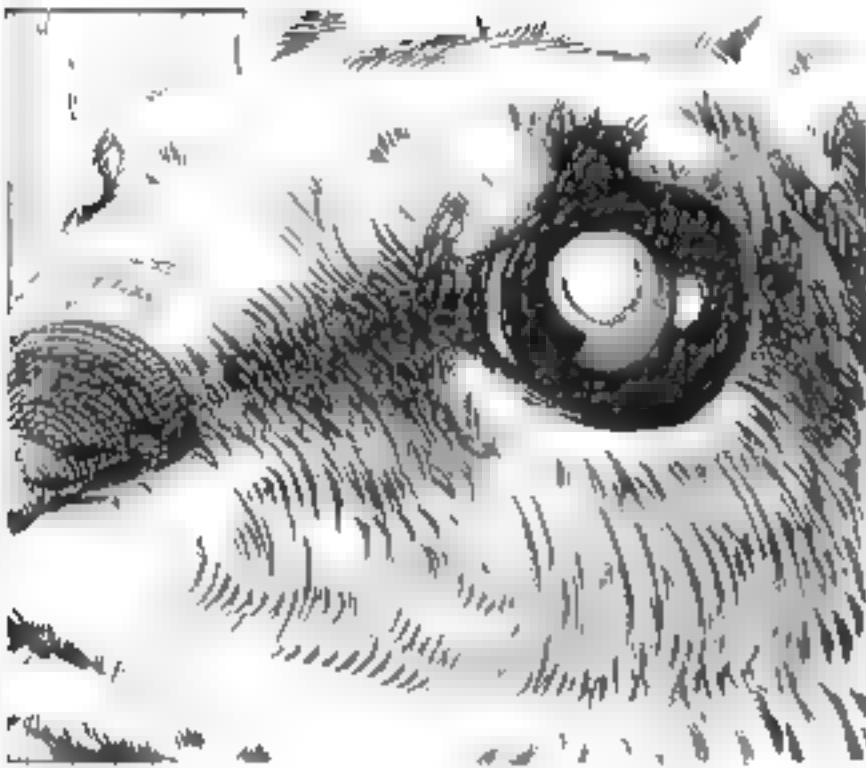
" of Beauty "

" of Mystery "

" of Meaning "



" and of Artistic naught "



" I am, for all coming and departing, a little bit of the hand of God, and I am not lost. "

" from the first meeting. "



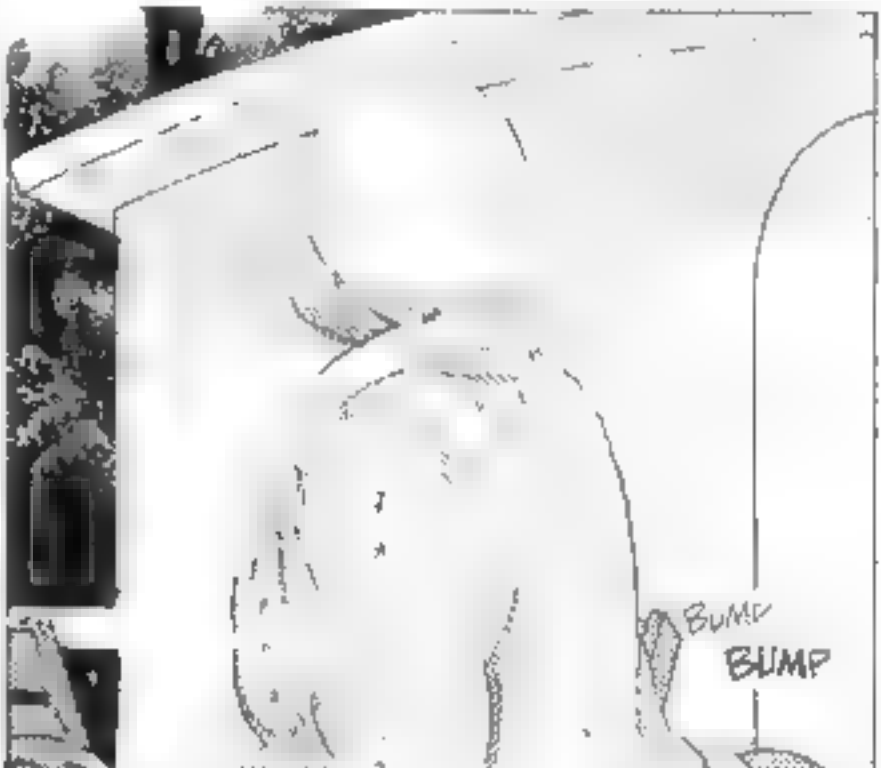
" the group out "



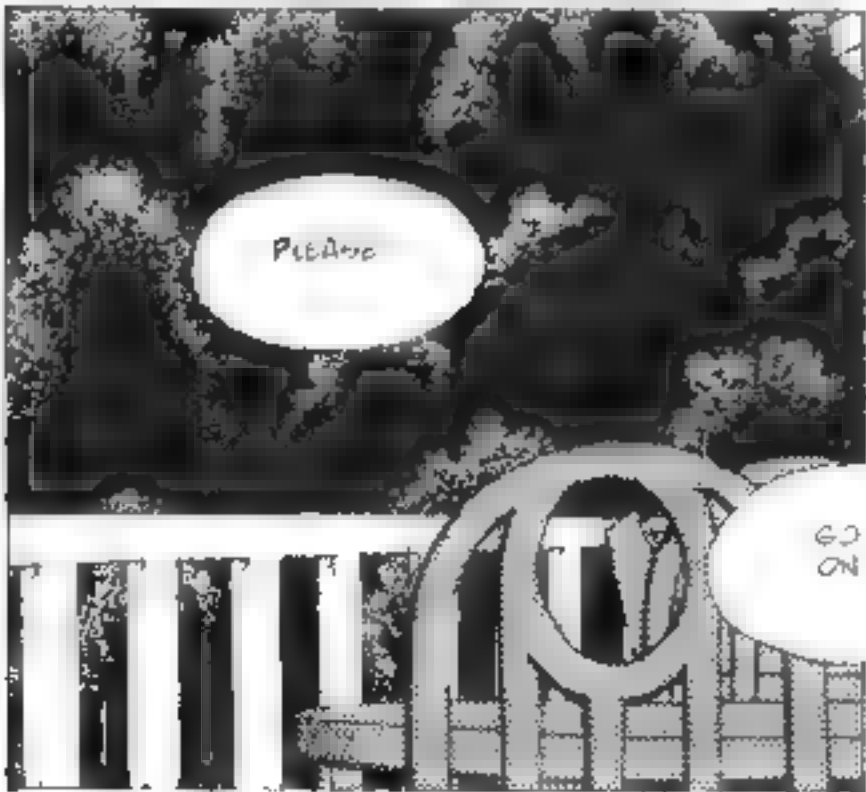
" THE EXACT TIME "



" AND THE FIRST KISS "

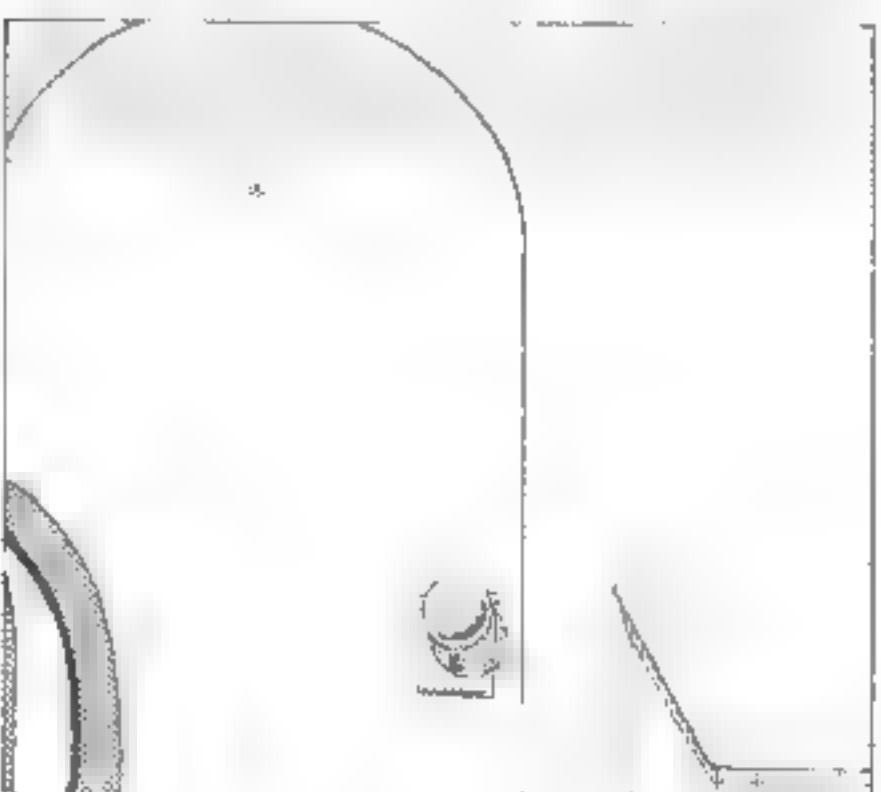


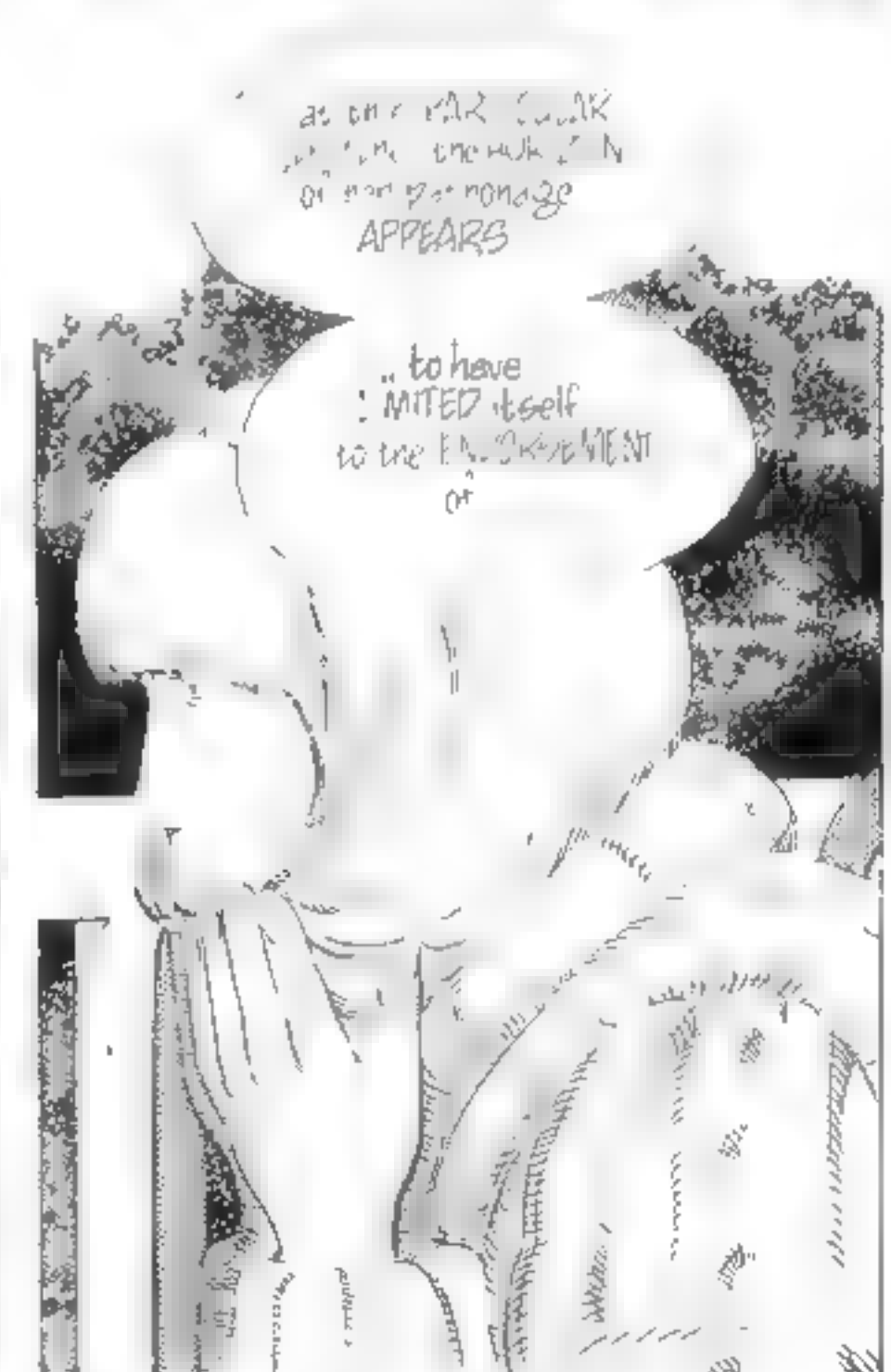
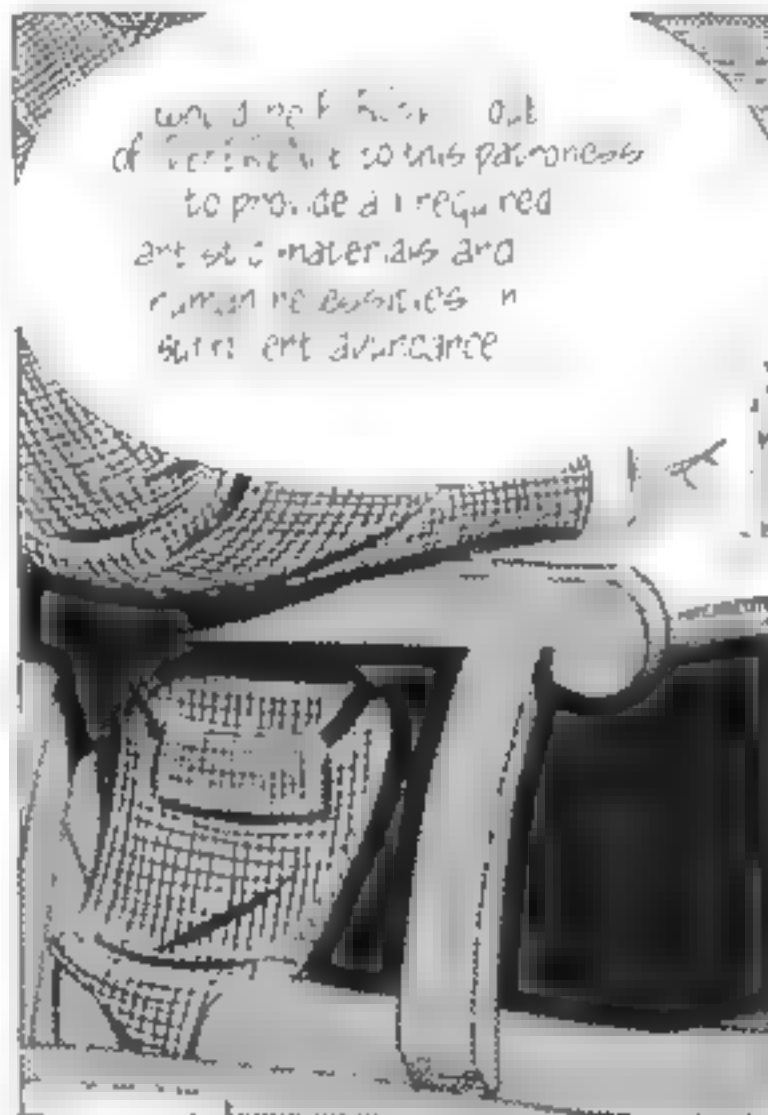
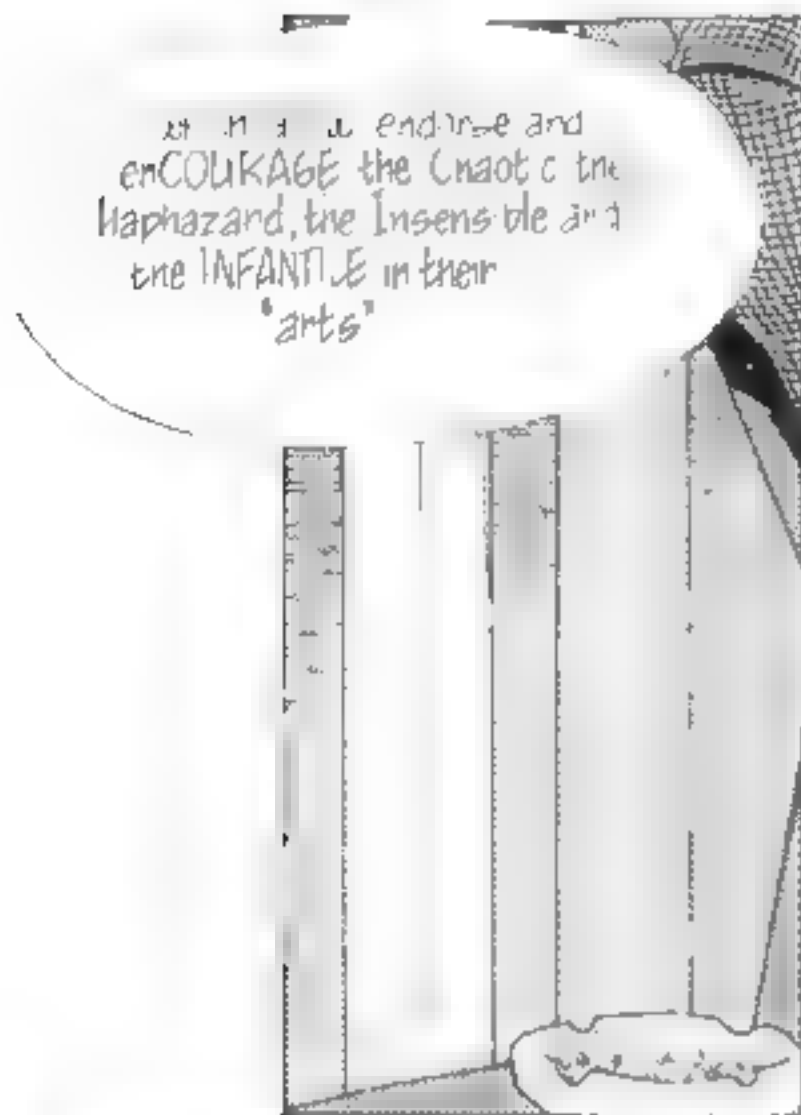
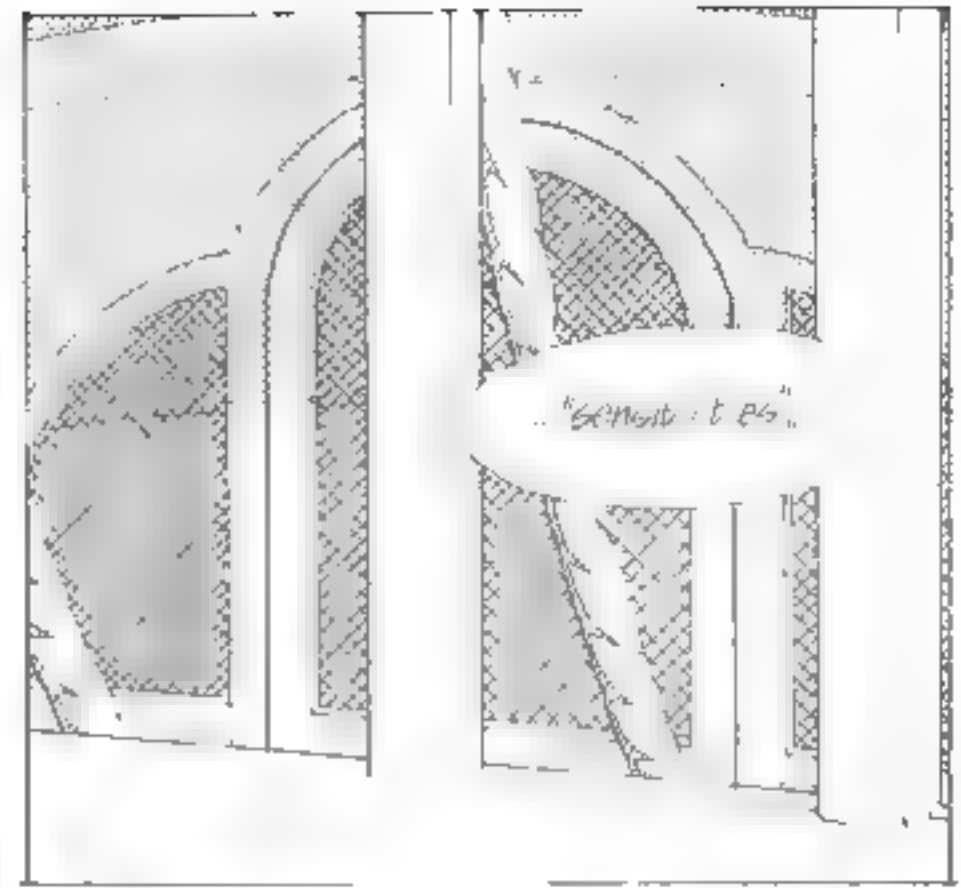
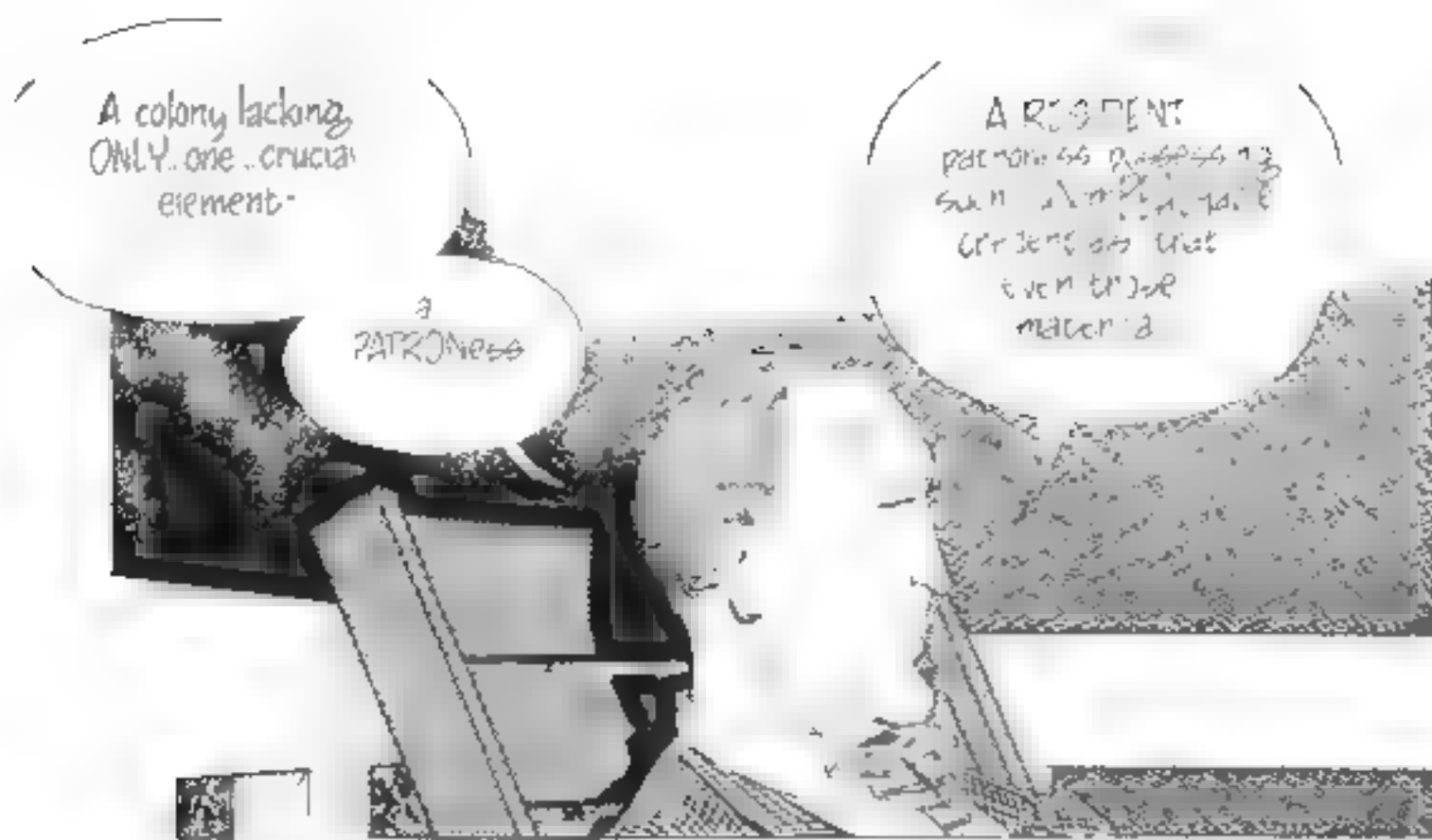
BUMP BUMP

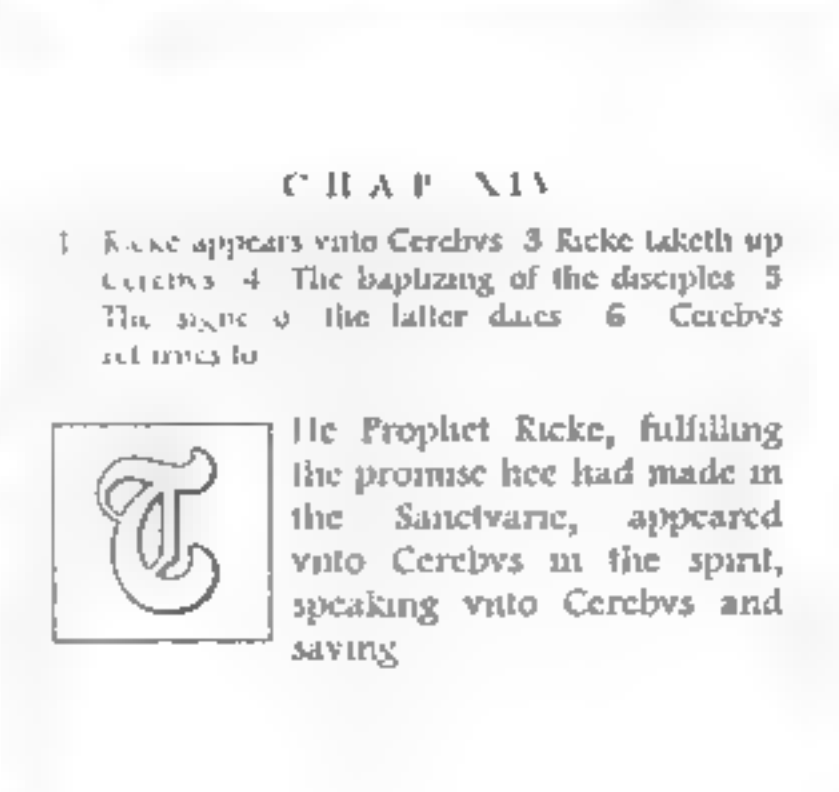
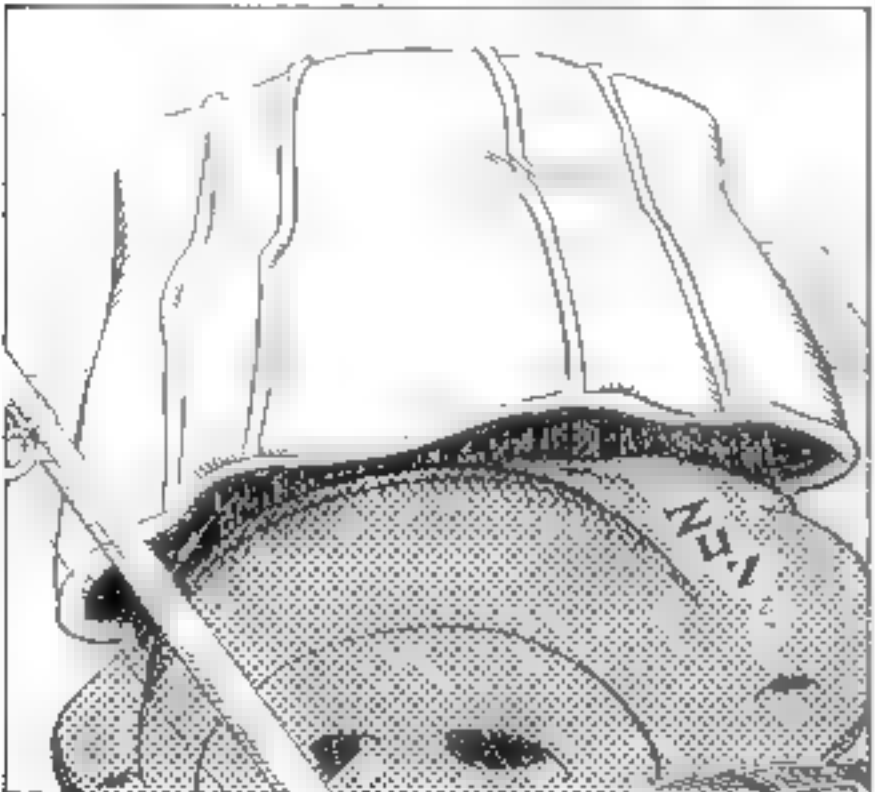
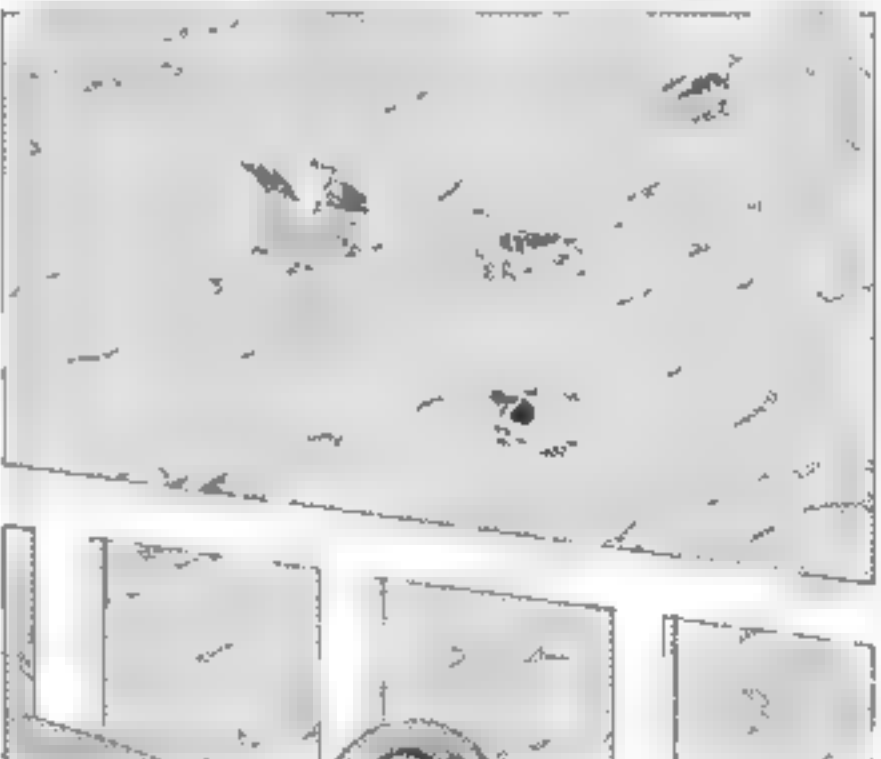
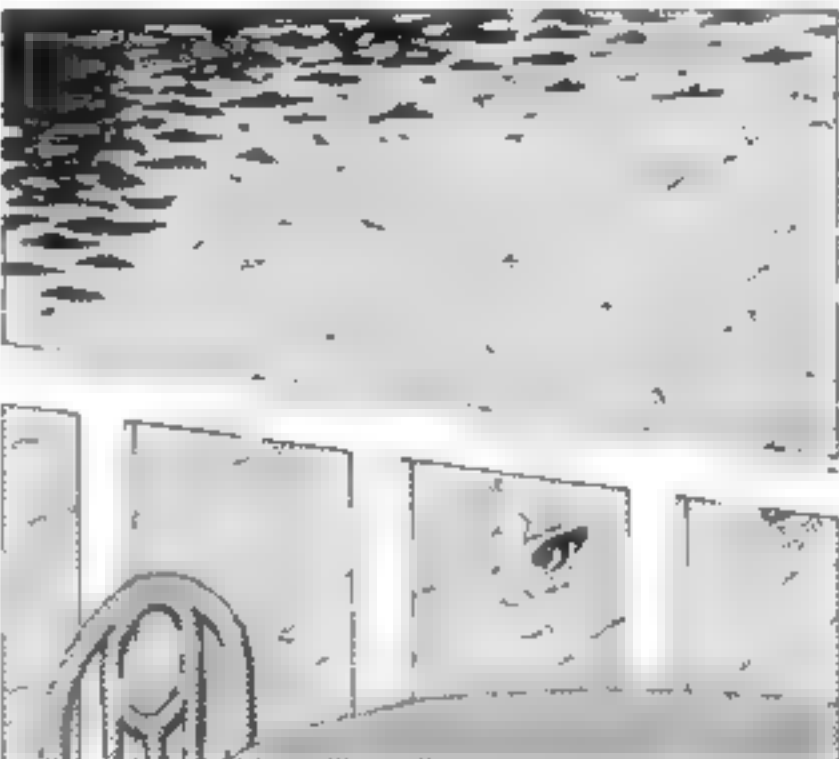
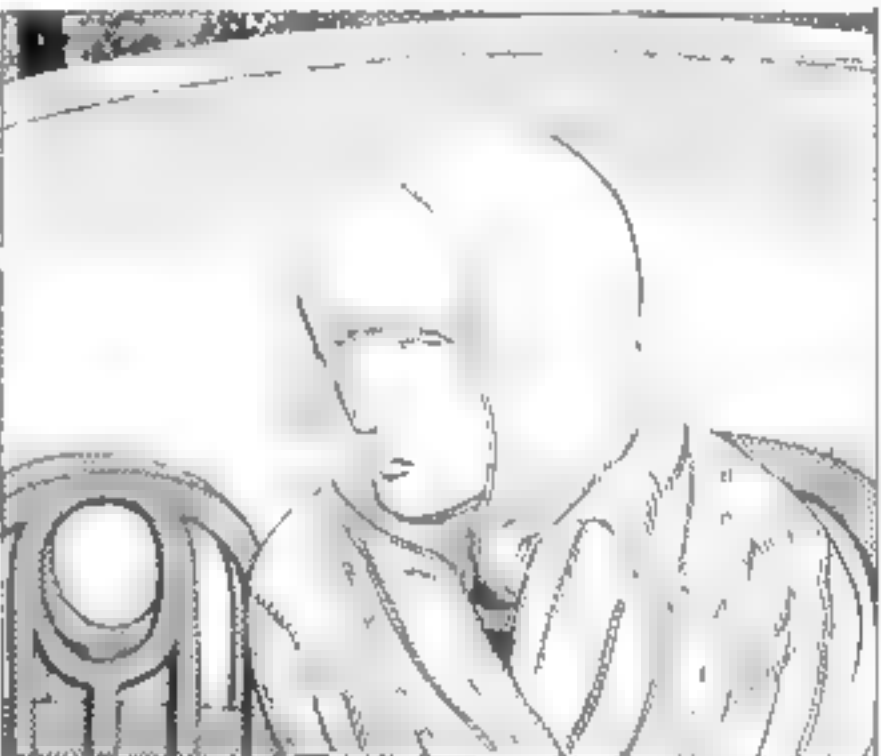
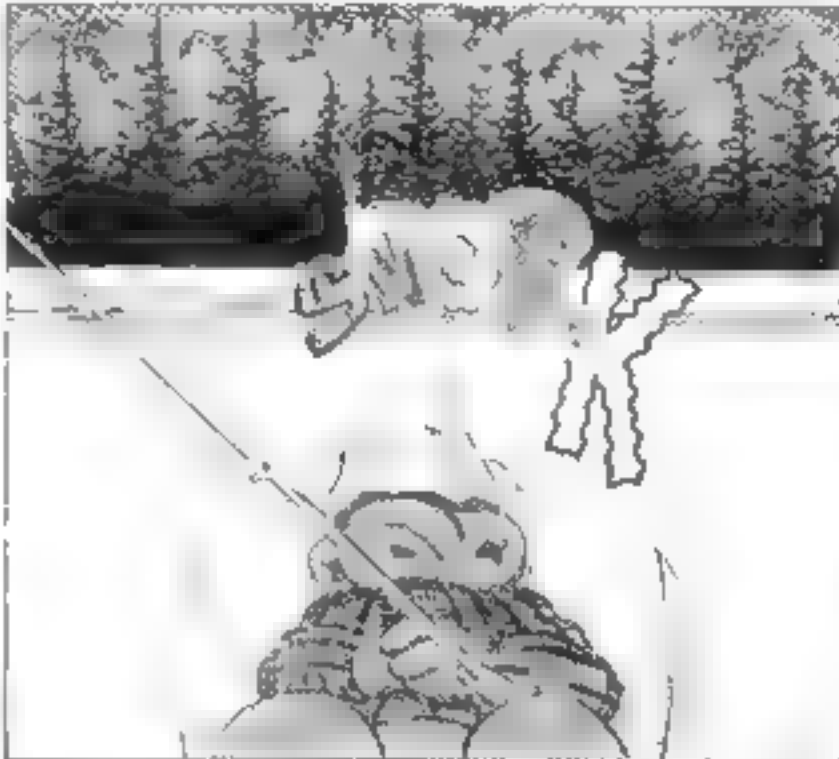
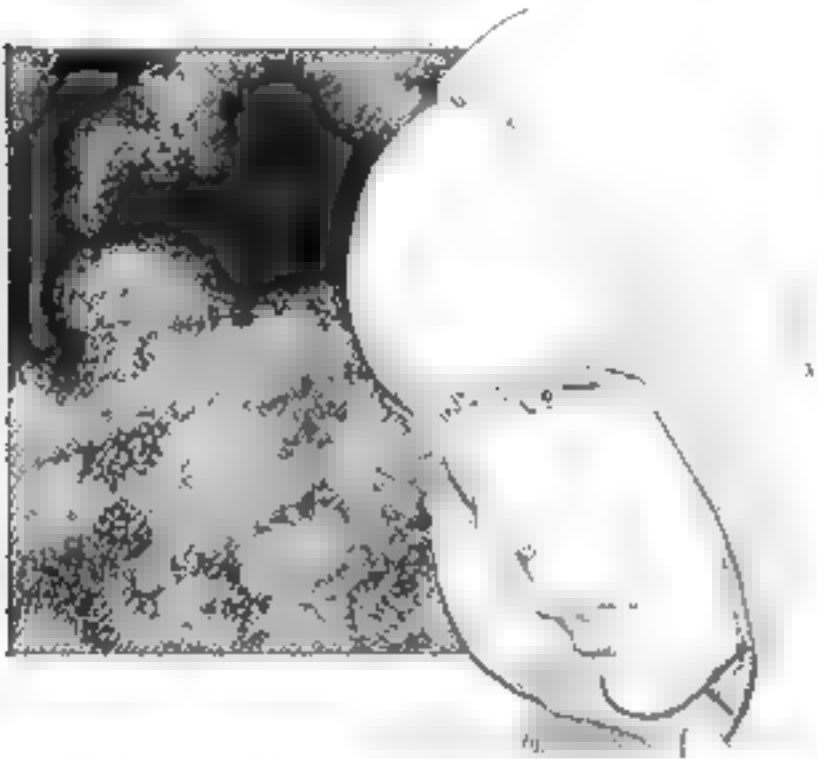
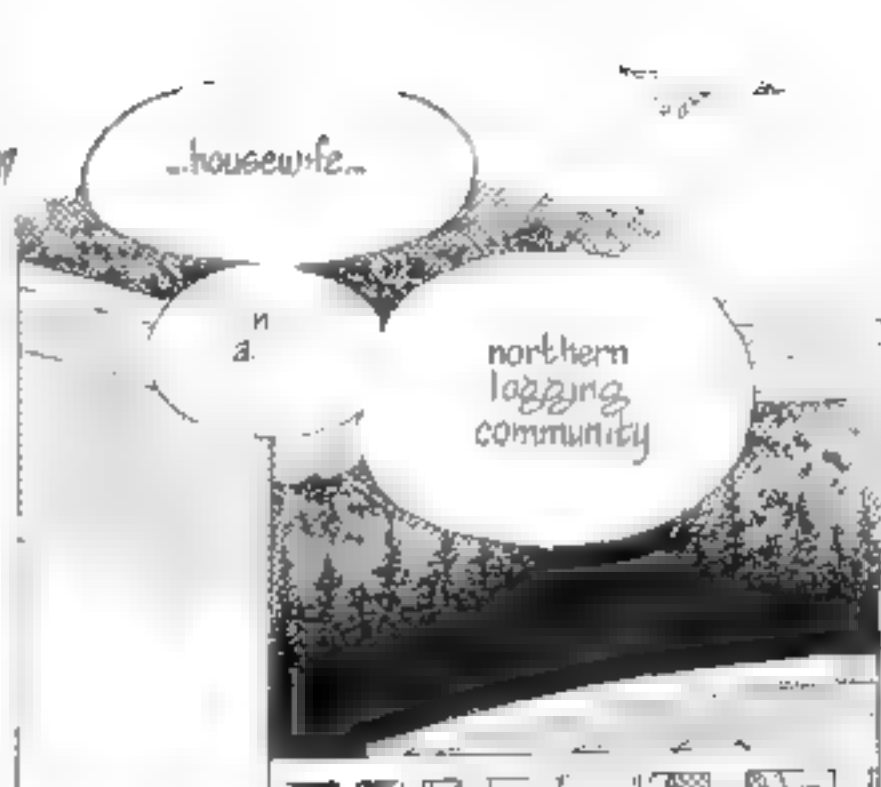
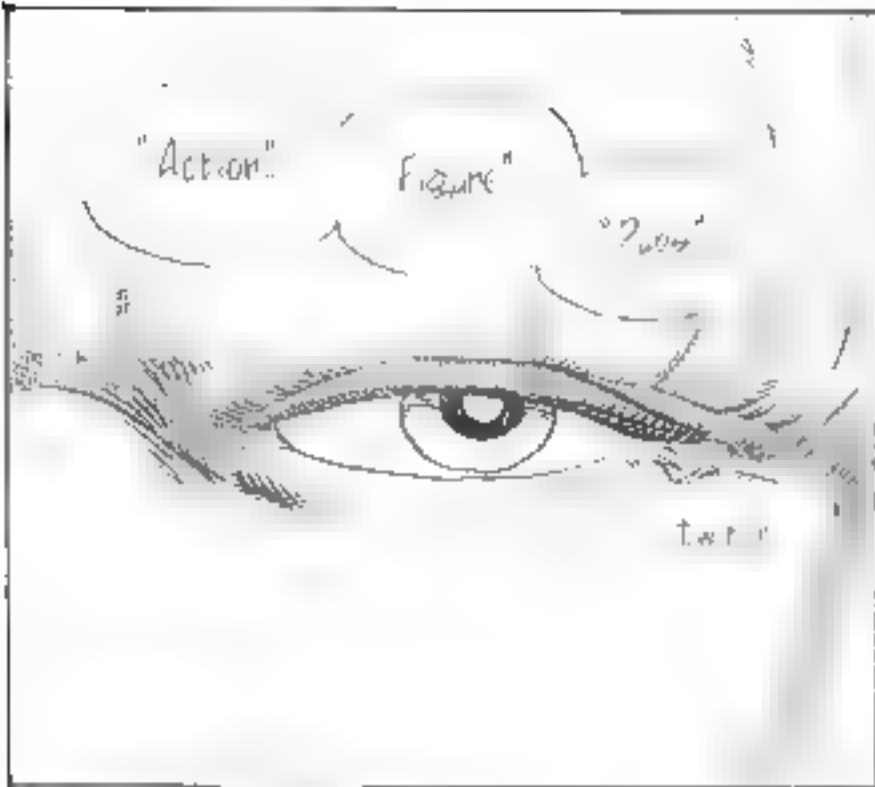


Please

23







#### CHAP XIV

1 Rick appears unto Cerebus 3 Rick taketh up Cerebus 4 The baptizing of the disciples 5 The sign of the latter days 6 Cerebus returns to



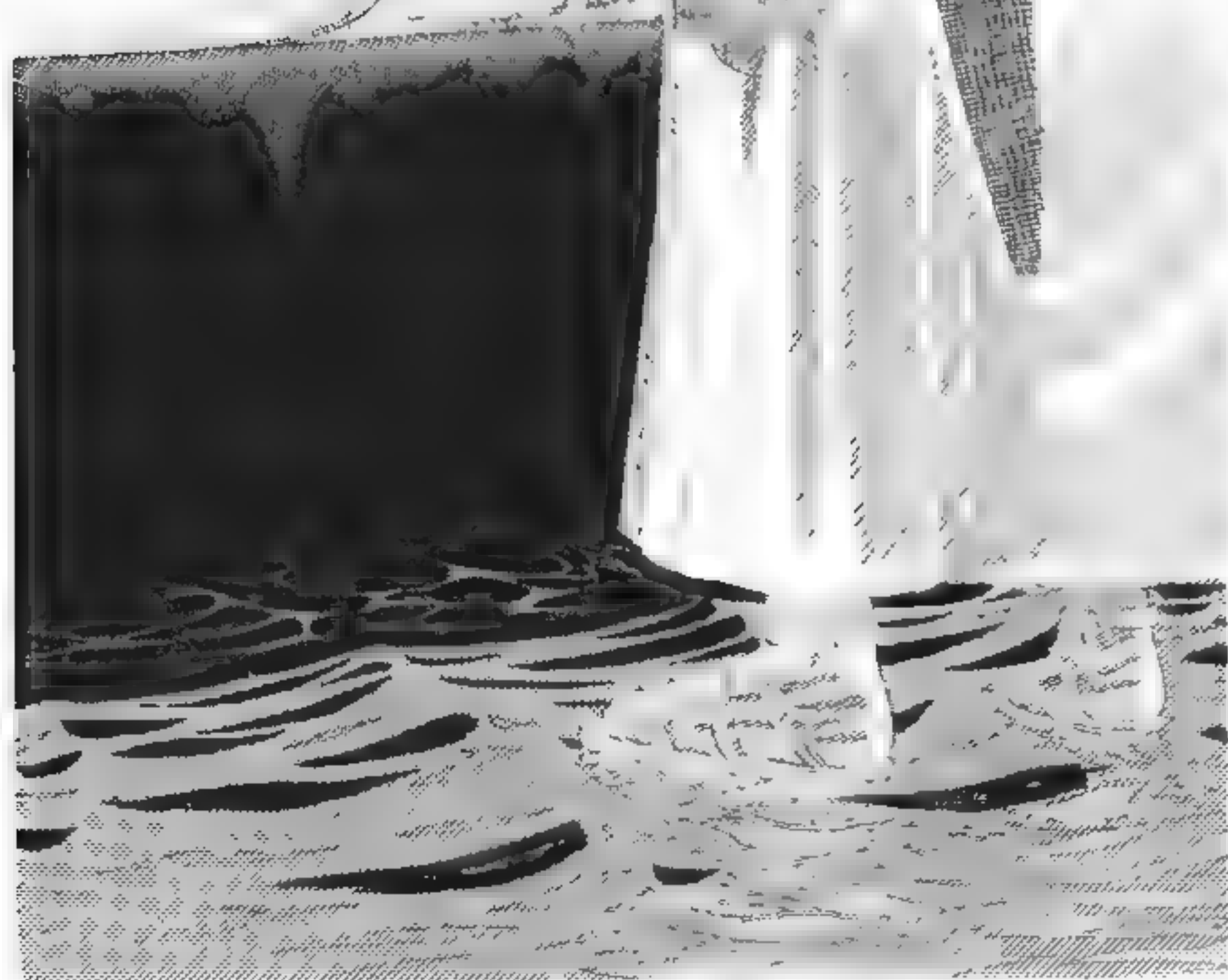
The Prophet Rick, fulfilling the promise hee had made in the Sanctuarie, appeared unto Cerebus in the spirit, speaking unto Cerebus and saying





2 The waters abound with the new and faithful, but as yet the fishers are few

Come and see



3 Then Ricke taketh up Cerebvs in the spirit and setteth him vpon the waters and, lo,

4 Cerebvs beheld Ricke in the Feldwar wilderness, baptizing disciples in the Name of the One God (howsobeit Ricke himselfe baptized not, but his disciples )

5 And Cerebvs marueiled and perceived not what hee saw (that it might be a signe in the time to come)







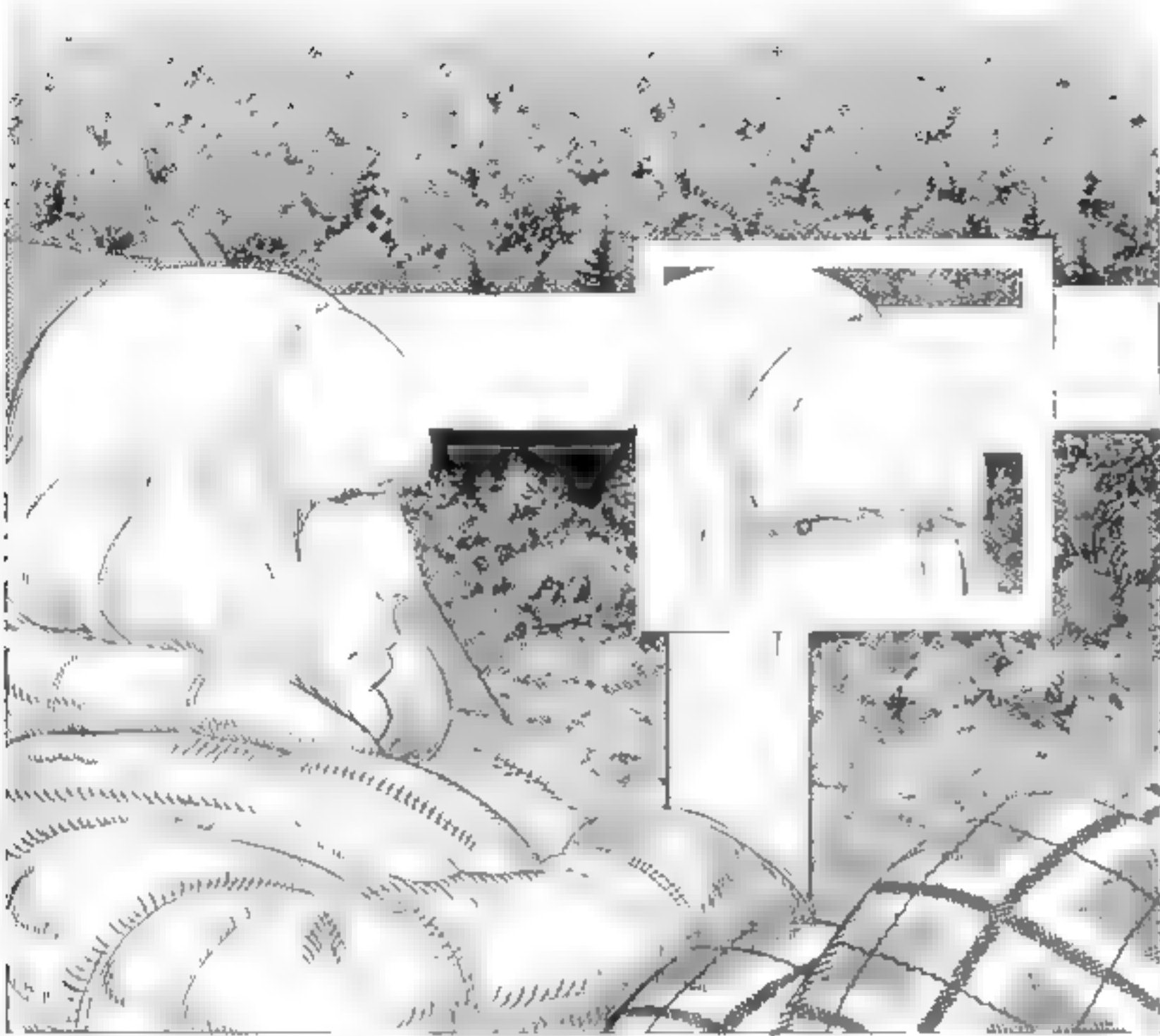
and with that, her ruffled dignity returned to its place of concealment beyond her stateroom.

Jay Anthony had been too long about the business of rending veils of self-deception not to recognize “You’ve given me a lot to think about” as euphemistic: meaning—more often than not—“You’ve given me a great deal to forget and a great deal to rationalize out of existence.” With so much at stake, Jay Anthony still dreaded the possibility that Ginevra would expend the balance of their journey in splendid and miserable self-isolation, gazing wistfully upon the countryside which was sliding, inexorably, past the creaking and groaning behemoth of a barge on which she found herself, while she mused, endlessly, about whether the scenery or vessel was a more apt metaphor for her largely failed existence. The surgical incision of Jay Anthony’s challenge would be scarring now, pink and bright below the threshold of her conscious awareness and—with the effortless convenience of a reversible garment—transforming itself into that state of wounded grace so beloved by her gender.

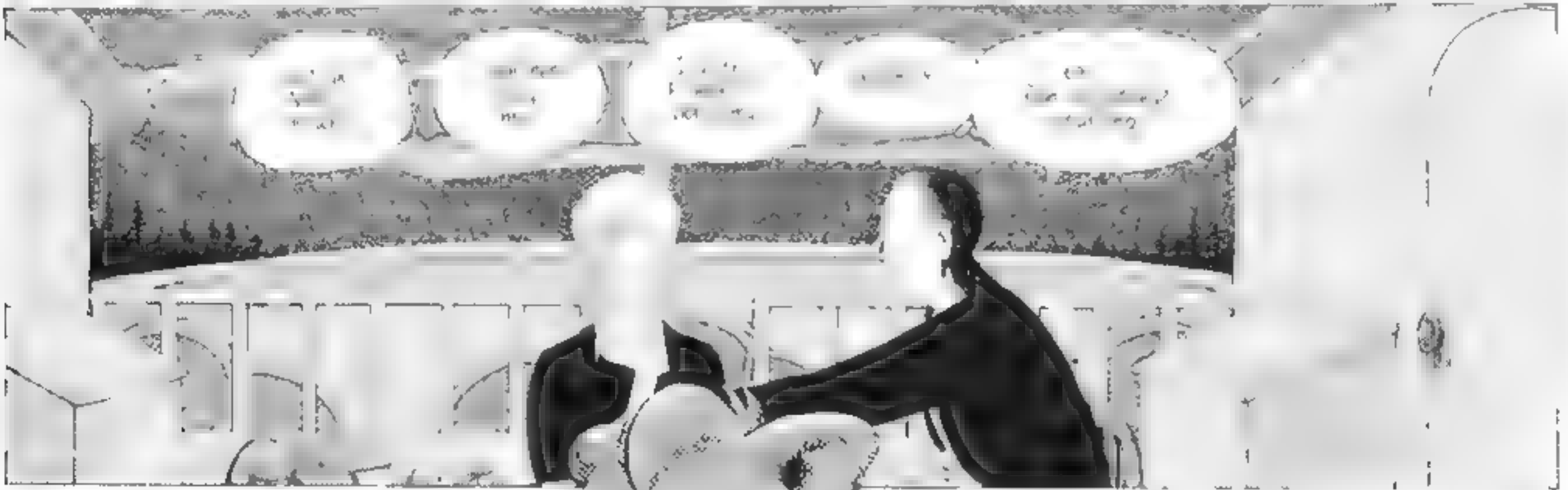
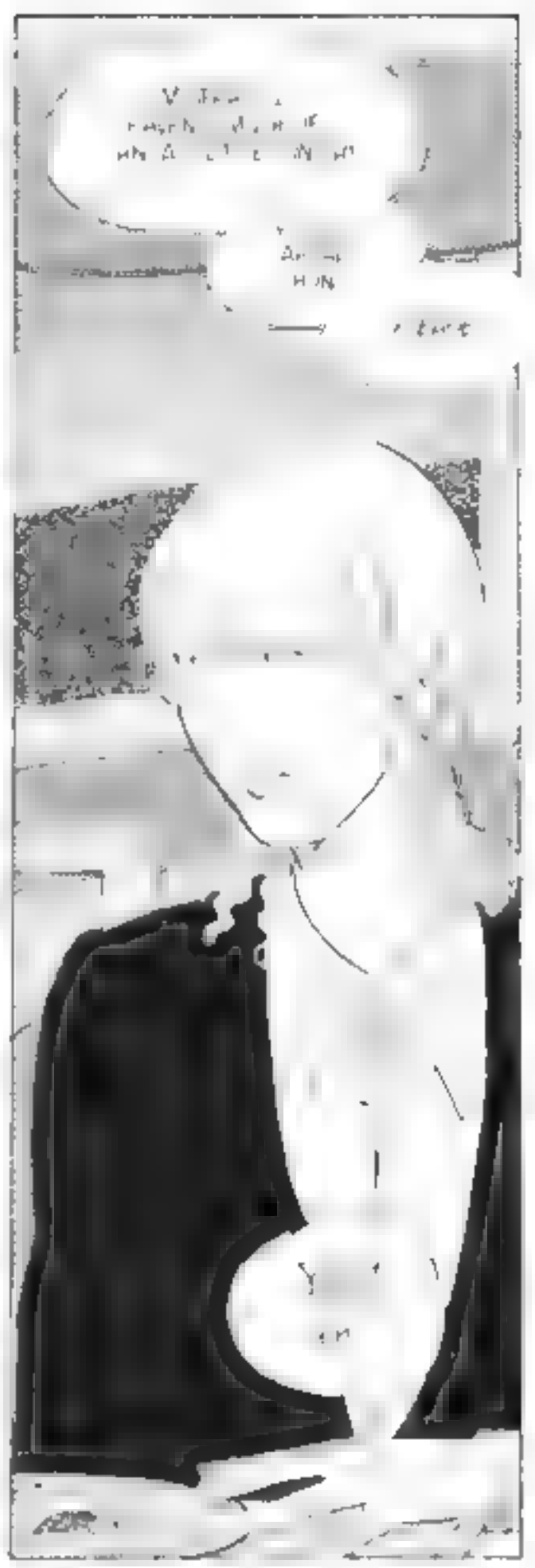
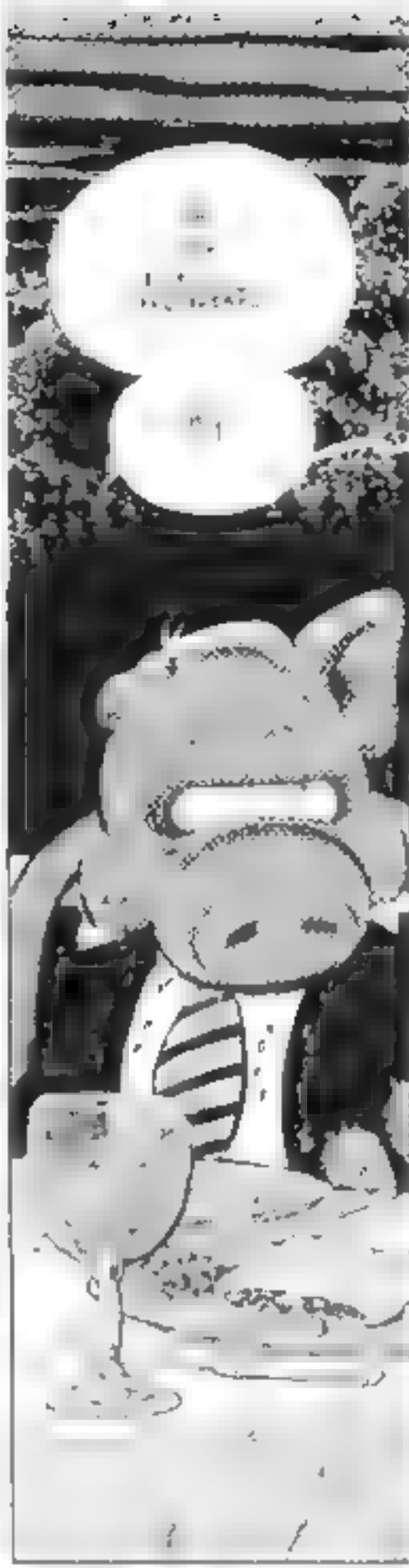
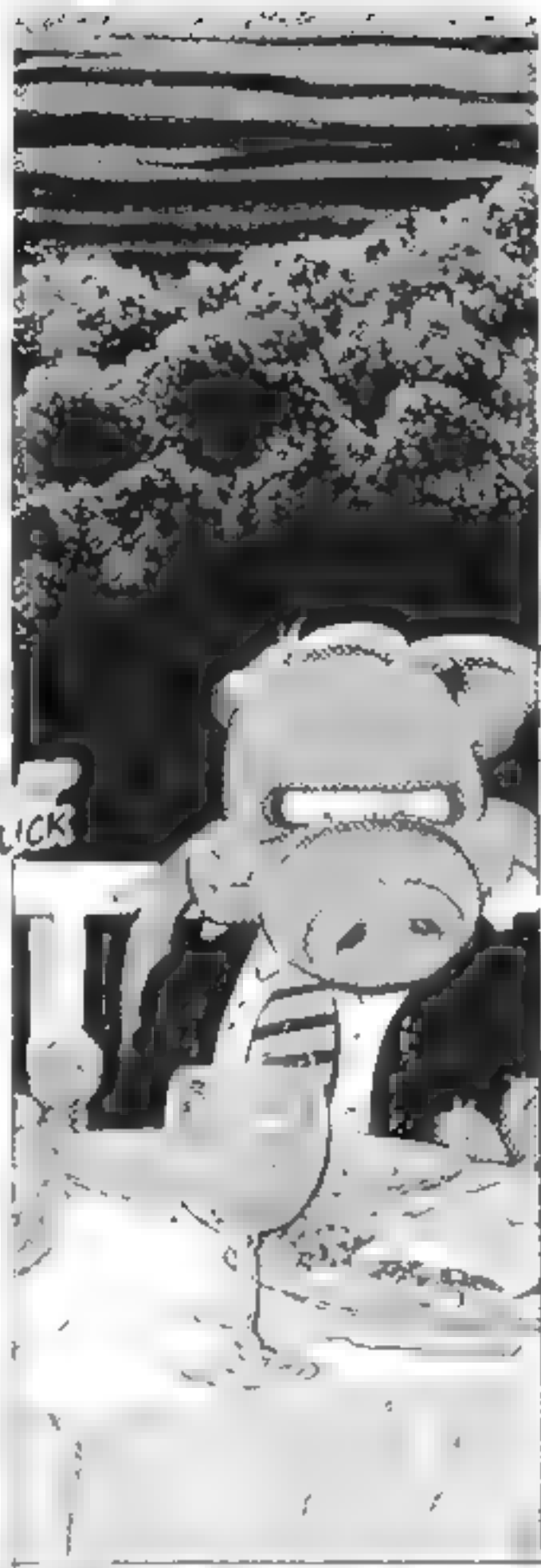
Nurturing its *own* empathic woundedness—womankind’s second greatest love—his triune audience would now be readying rotten fruit and browning vegetables in anticipation of the second act of the autumnal melodrama and Jay Anthony’s *role* as playwright, director, and (*hissss*) first villain. Unless he missed his guess, this very night would see—after Ginevra and Jozan had repaired to her stateroom and Jay Anthony to his own—the descent of the first-act curtain upon the *haute cuisine* debris of their evening meal.

By then—with all the painstaking circumspection and finesse of the conversational “angler’s” expertise—Jay Anthony would hope to have danced and skimmed his baited pleasantries across the still surface above his intended heroine’s higher ideals.

Mentally arranging his tactics, he mused that he might yet fan her spark of interest into a small but unquenchable flame: might yet foreshadow—both for Ginevra and for their audience—the transformation of the “people’s princess” into the “Patroness of Mealc” in the second... and final... act.

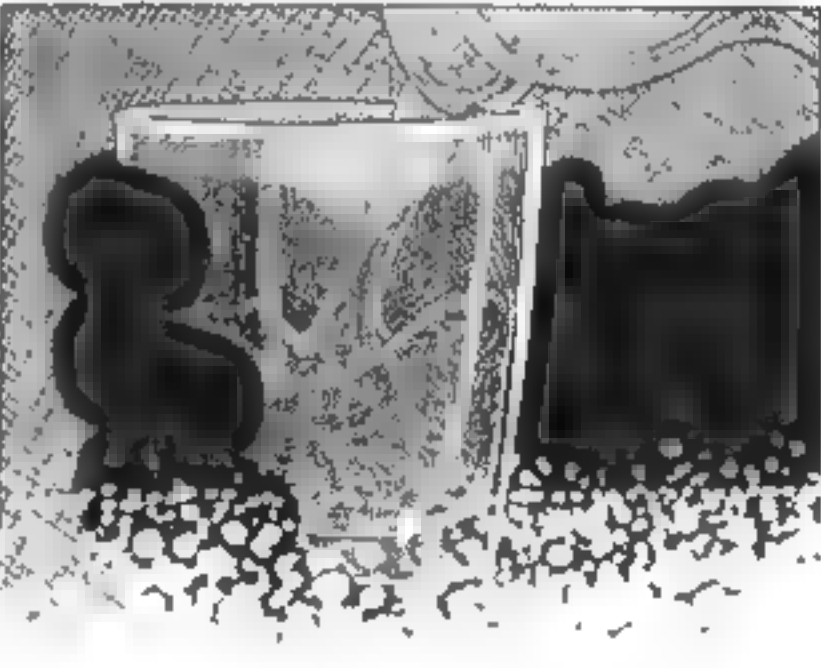
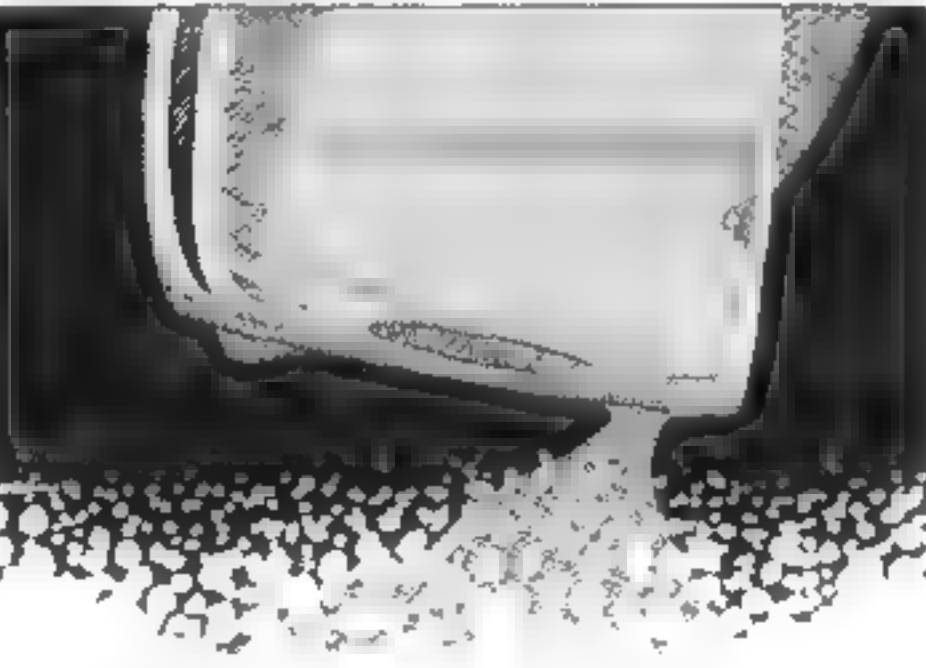
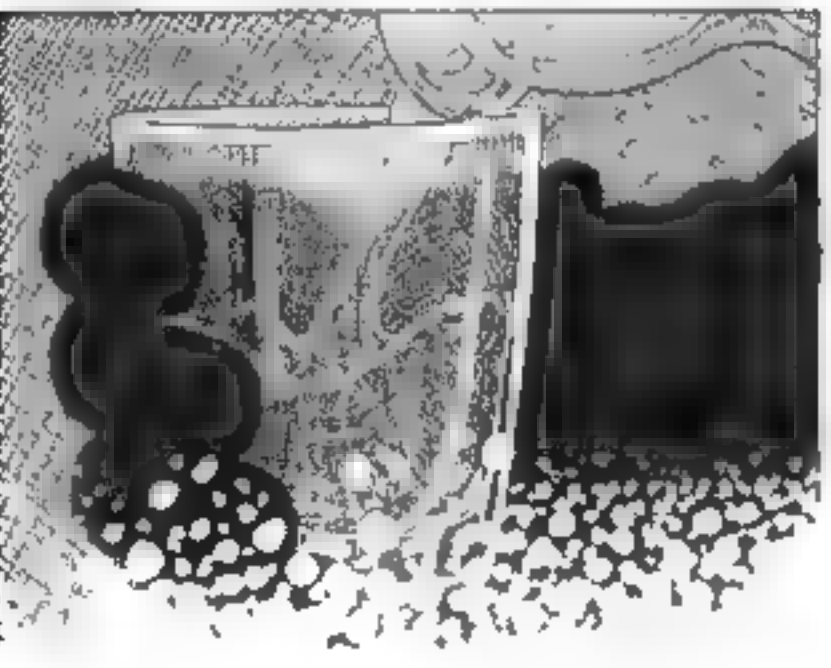
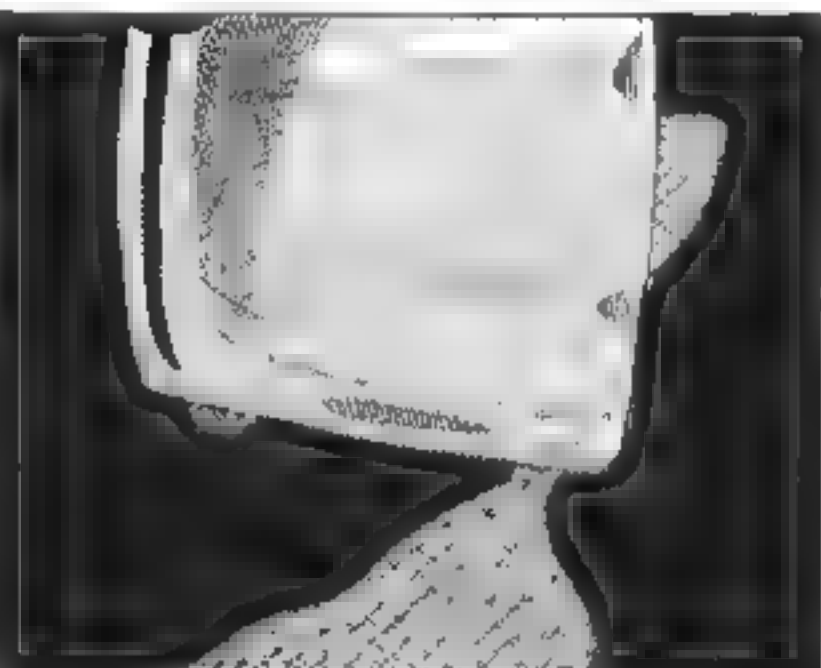
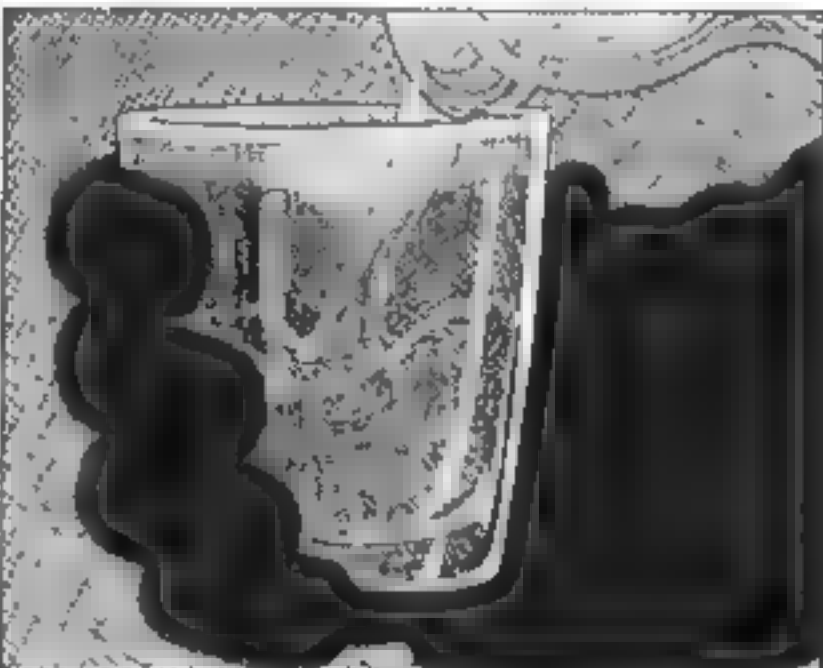
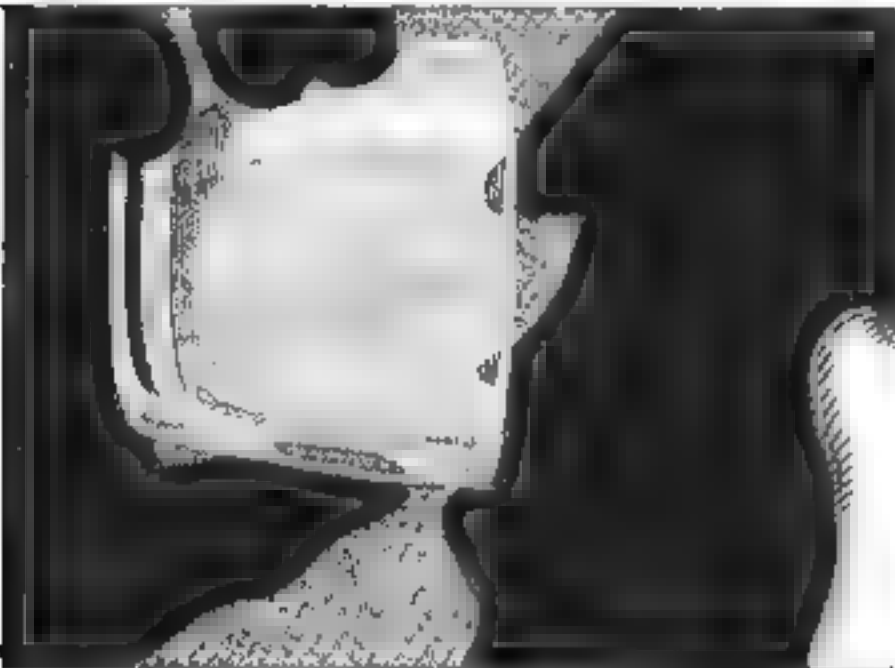
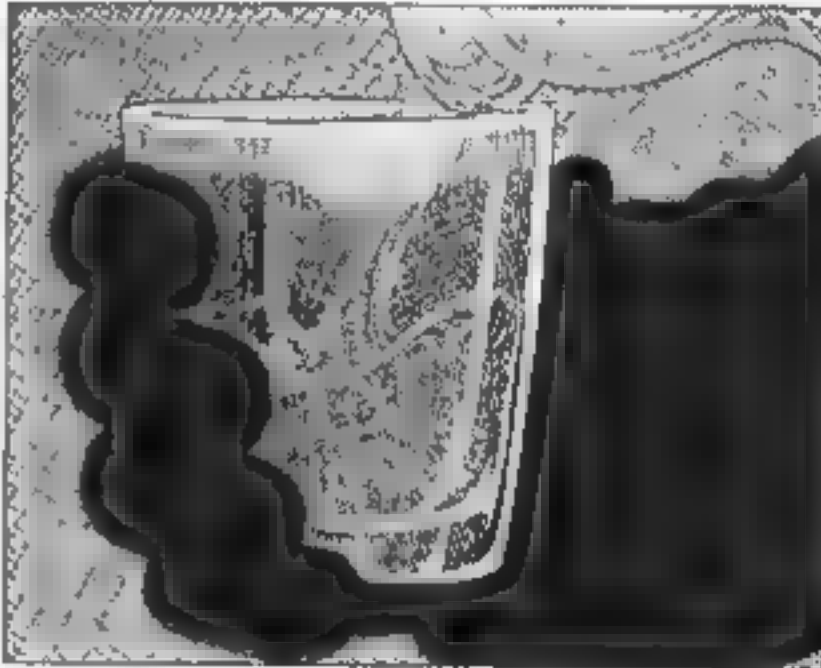
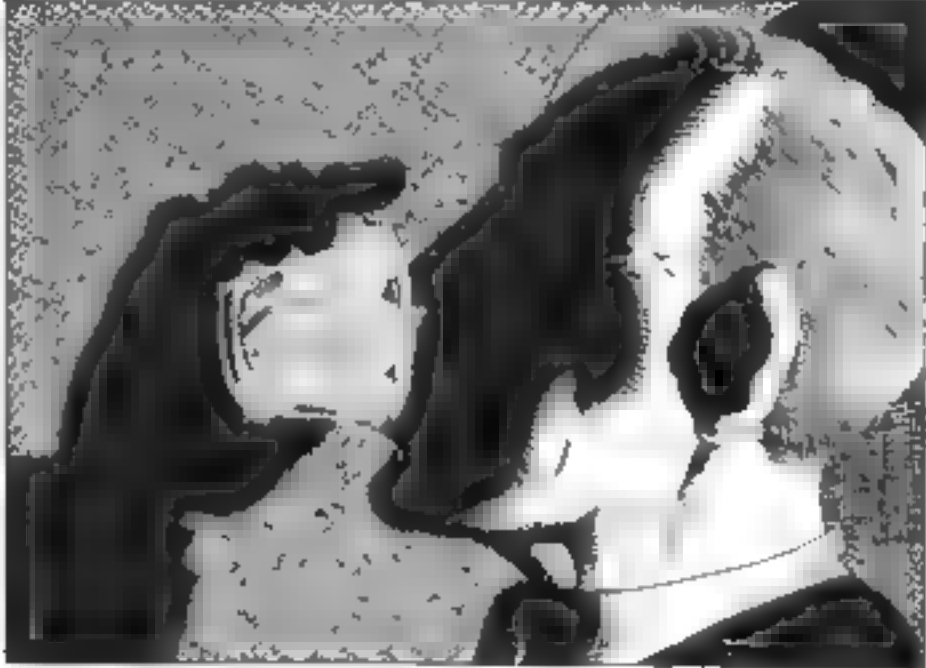
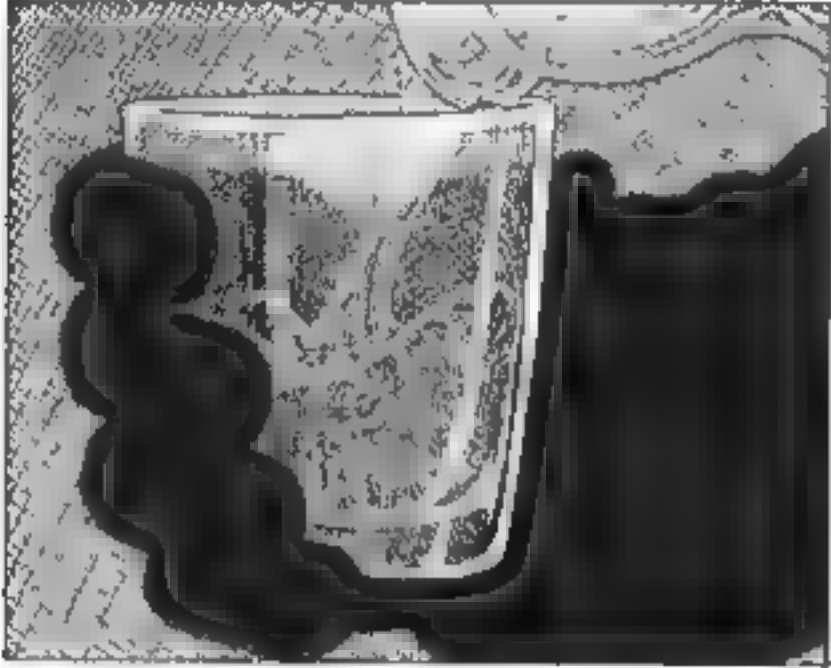
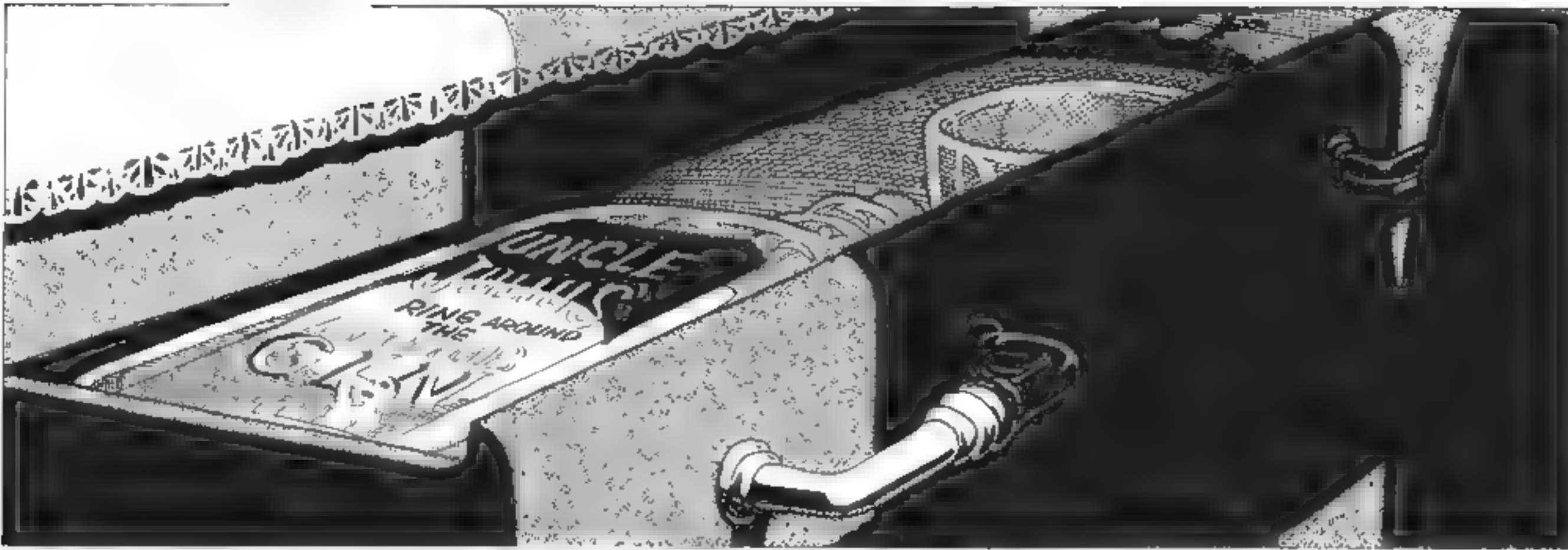


CHOFF  
CHOMP  
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CHOMP  
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to the fact that Ginevra had forgotten, already, the radiant destiny he had painted for her—in broad and vivid brushstrokes—earlier in the day: resigned as well to the certainty that his own fate was far from enviable and still further from assured. All eyes would be upon him now, at the commencement of the second act. In just so pressure-laden a circumstance, in another time, he would have found refuge in a bout of excessive drinking. But tonight—with a small glass of gin untouched and forgotten at his elbow—it was a more mature Jay Anthony Diver who considered his next move.

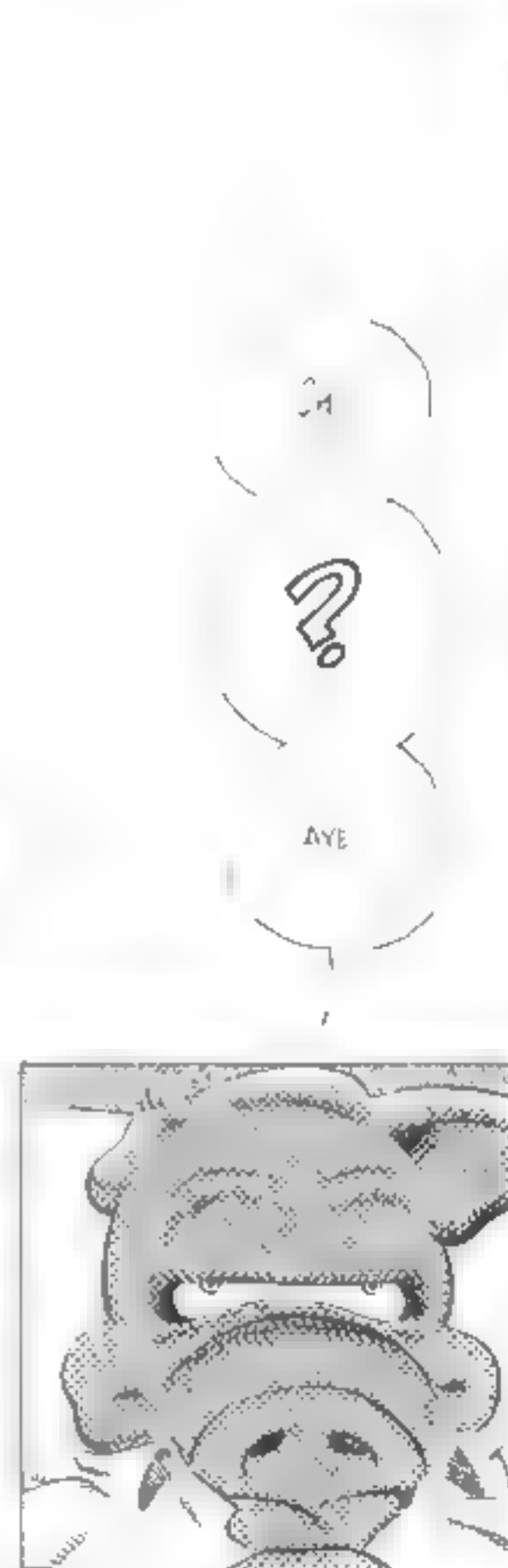
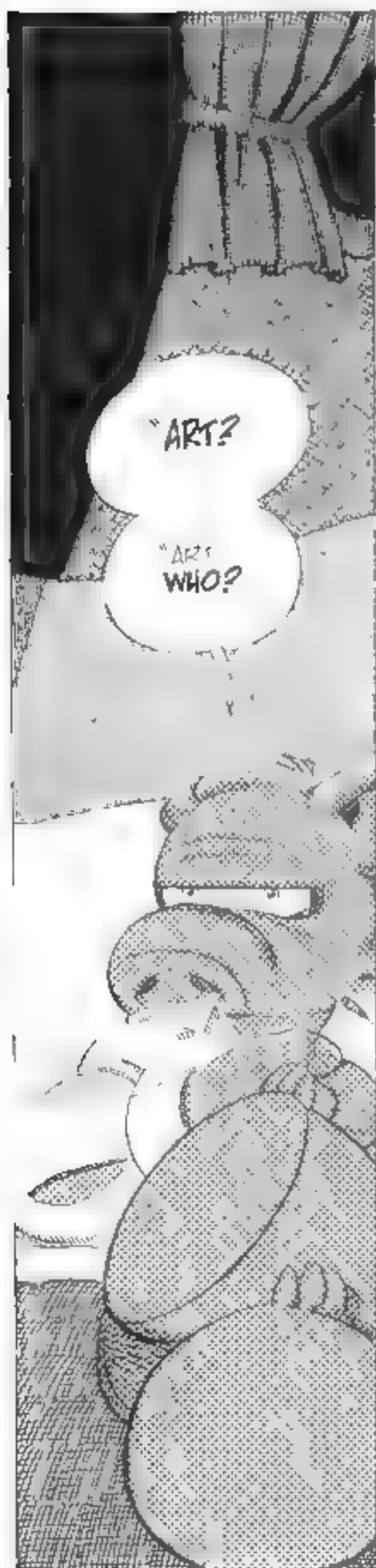
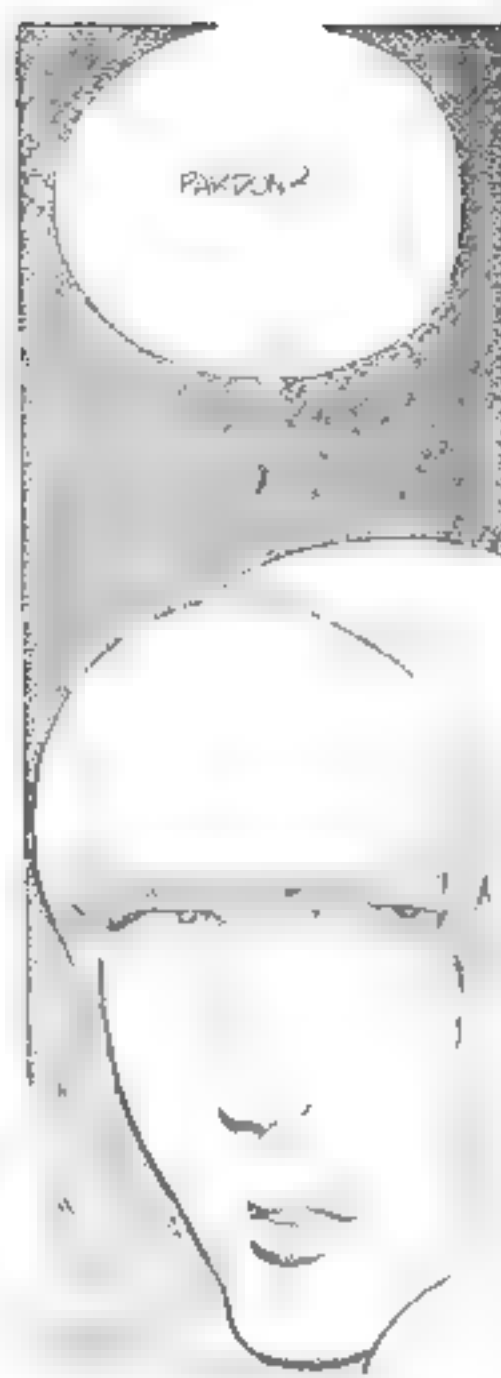
"I'll give them a show," he thought, buoyant at the sudden insight. "They always want to know what I'm thinking. Very well, I shall *tell* them. I shall give it to them *straight*, shorn of all sugared coverings, bereft of forelock-tugging and..."

No, he amended. I shall tell *myself*.

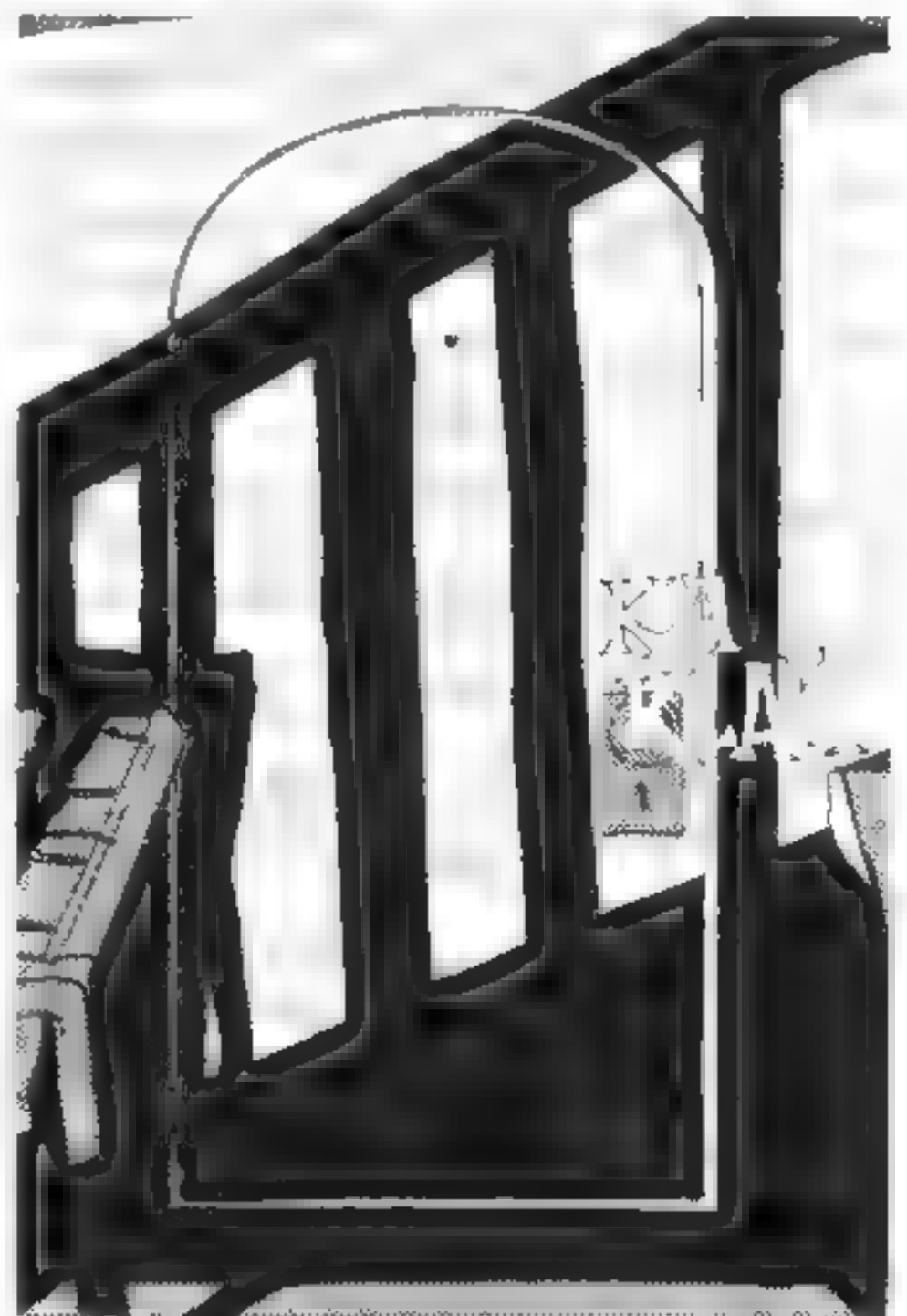
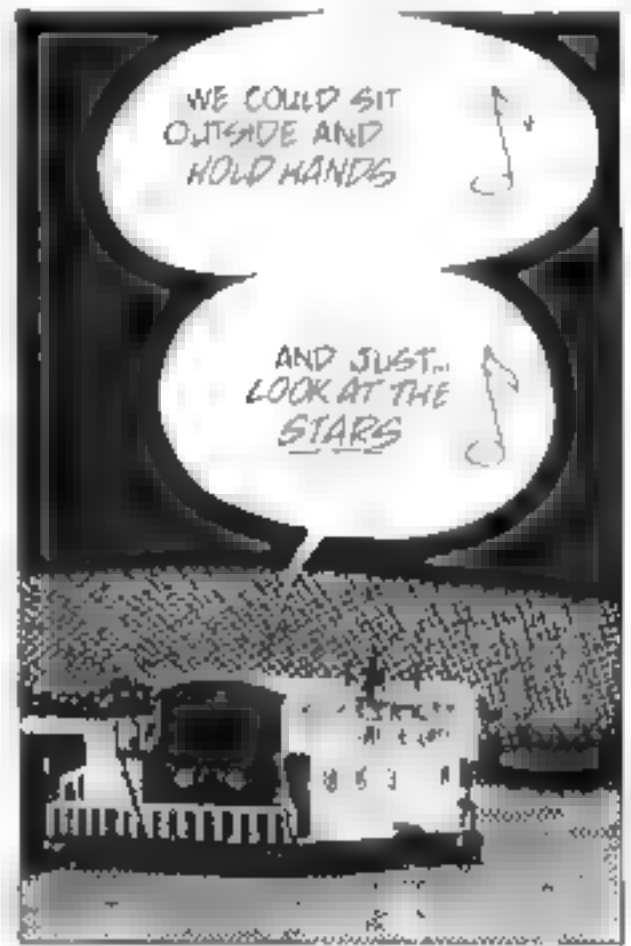
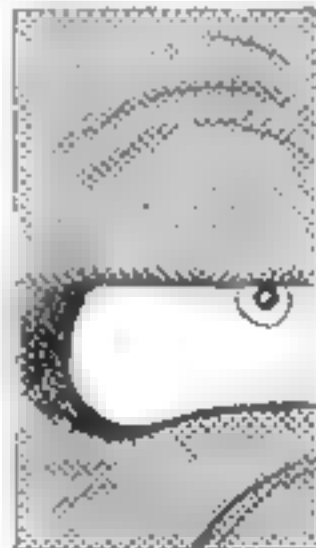
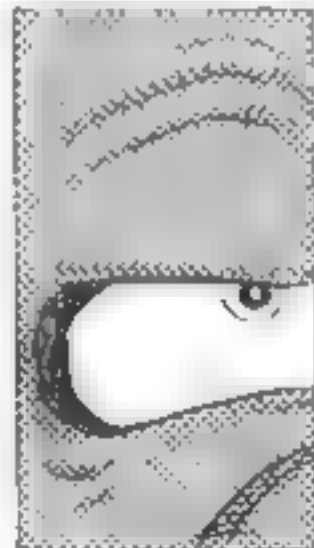
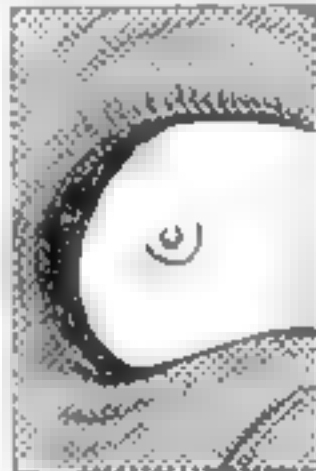
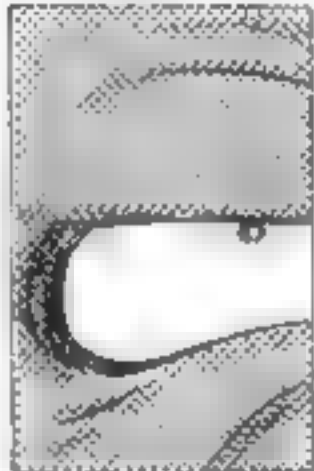
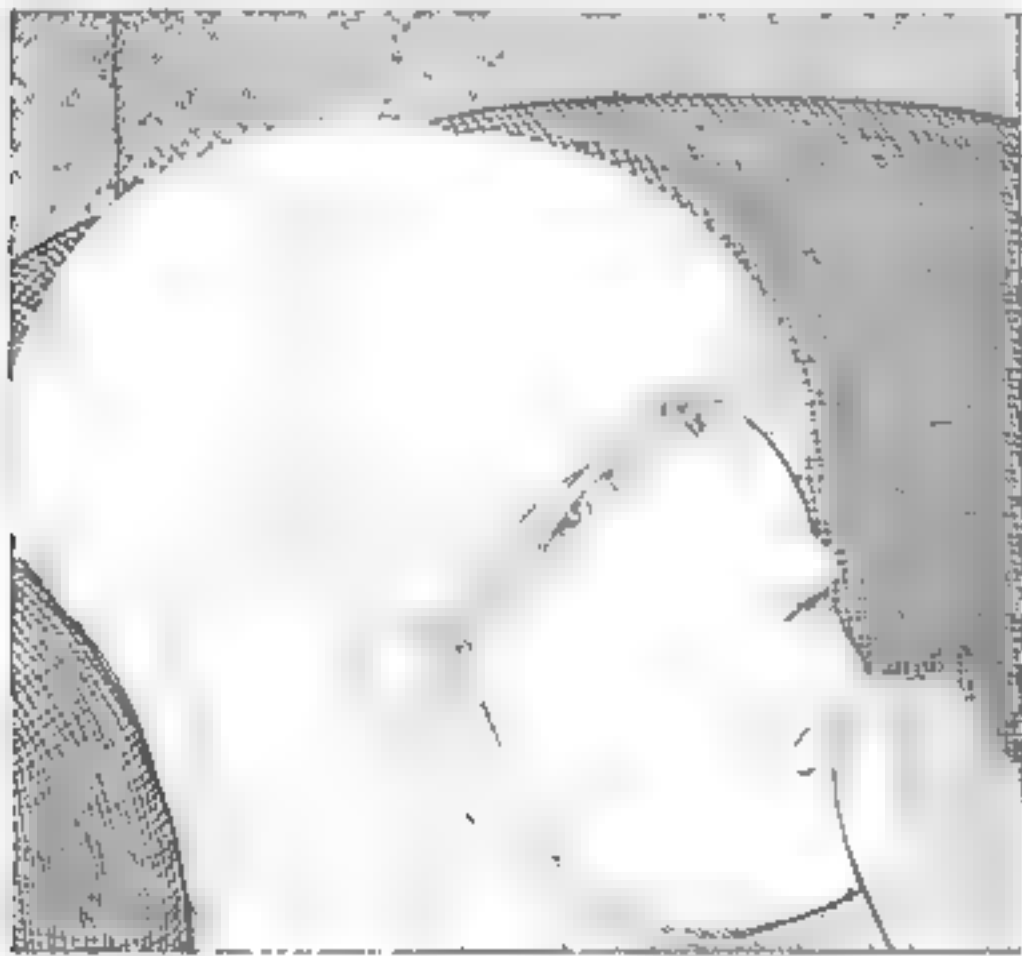
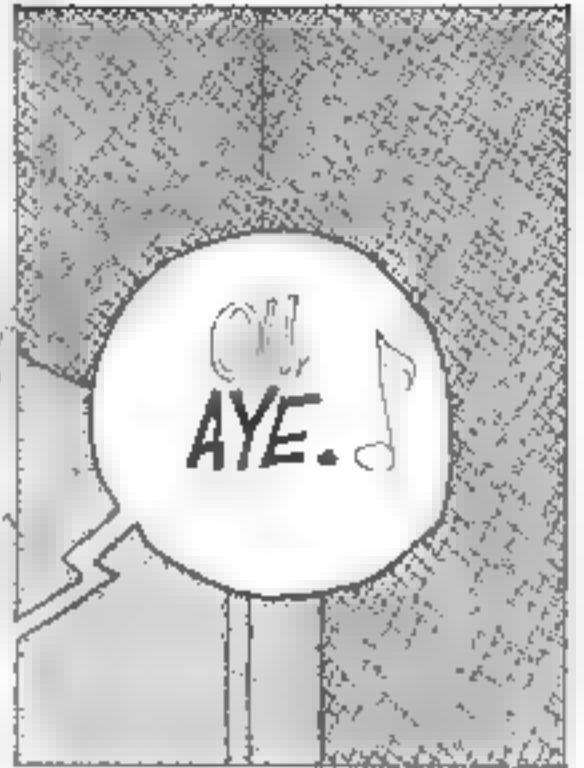
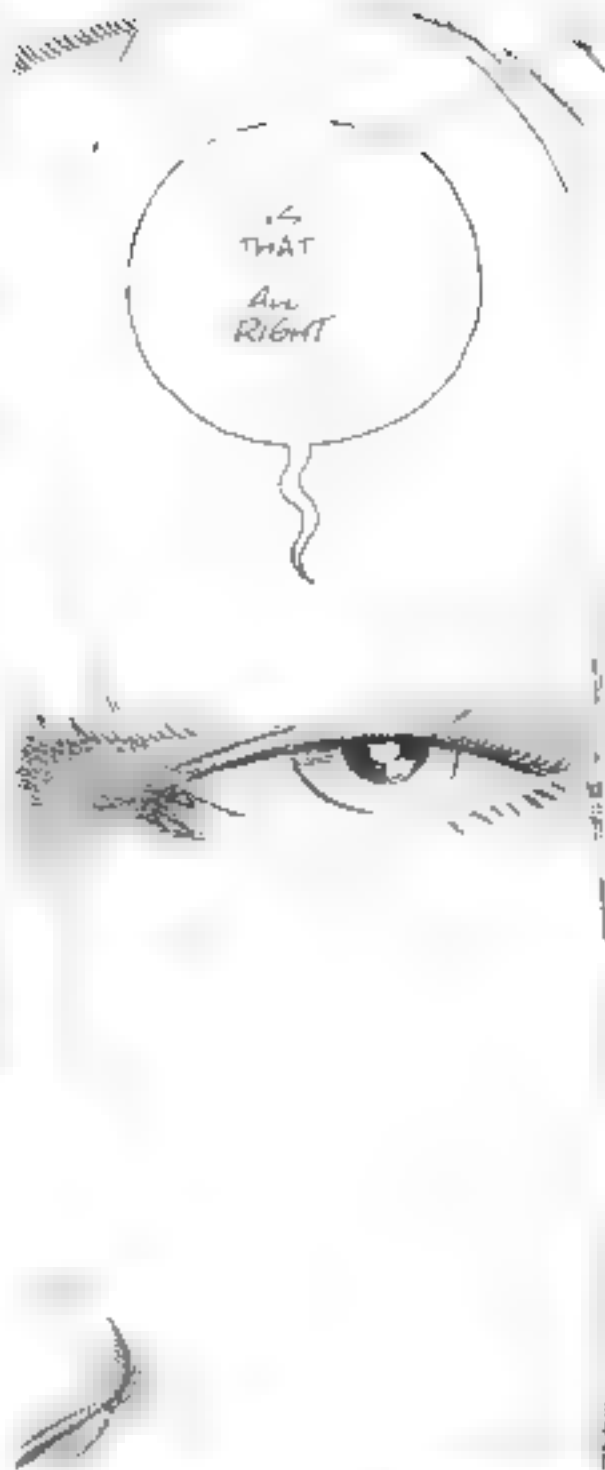
Small but galvanizing waves of potentiality crawled enticingly across Jay Anthony Diver's scalp.

I shall go out there and my interior voice will speak aloud, for once, without compromise or amendment. Afterward—if they see no recourse but to execute me, then well and good. Afterward—they will be *welcome* to execute me and welcome to execute *Xena*, as well, if it comes to that. Afterward—they can cook and eat our two corpses with Jay-Anthony-and-Xena-Gizzard-Stuffing for all that I care!

Jay Anthony rose from his chair, resolute and confident. He strode briskly to the storeroom door, unlocked it, and stepped out into the night.









"I think I shall tell myself the story of my education," continued Jay Anthony, "under these beatific heavens."

"Do! Please!"

"Shall I, really?"

He waited expectantly for himself to begin, while his yawn rose to greet the white, sardonic moon.

"Well," he began, "as an infant I seldom prayed. I considered each of my prayers to be a sufficient hedge against the consequences of any number of future iniquities. By the age of my majority, roughly considered, each 'now I lay me' constituted a lone spiritual bulwark against the repercussions of many hundreds of ethically and morally transgressive acts."

"Throw down a gauntlet," murmured some part of himself.

A small Jay Anthony Diver hurtled out of him, plunging to the barge's deck and dividing on impact (in unison with his stern rebuke) into three still smaller beings.

"Silence! I am about to regale myself with many memorable recollections reserved for the darkness of such rivers and the judgement of such skies."

Below, a lighted match passed from cigarette to cigarette. The voice resumed.

"I was adept at courting gods and goddesses. I prayed to each in succession, abandoning each of them in turn when I felt myself to have been abandoned *by* them. I prayed for every triviality that crossed my awareness, until prayer and the trivial became interchangeable to me. I believed because I cried out 'My God!' each time one of my sins returned upon me that belief was rooted



deeply in my soul. Then I went to school. For thirteen years, half a hundred earnest men and women pointed to newly minted philosophies and cried to me, 'There's the real thing. These other intellectual currencies are only worn and degraded precursors.' They damned the books I read and the things I thought by calling them 'masculine'; later the fashion changed, and they damned the same things by calling them misogynistic.

"And so I turned, clever for my years, from the teachers to the storytellers, listening — to the lyric tenor of Gaiman and the tenor robusto of Campbell, to Eisner with his first bass and his fine range, to Moore with his second bass and occasional falsetto, to Miller and Crumb, bassos profundo. I gave ear to Pekar declaiming and Pekar droning.

"This, at least, did me no harm. I learned a little of integrity — enough to know that it had nothing to do with beauty — and I found, moreover, that there existed a great literary tradition, consisting in its entirety of its own successive deaths and subsequent resurrections from individual to individual and generation to generation...

"Then I fell in love, and the savoury lustre of illusions fell away from me. The fibre of my heart coarsened, and my eyes grew miserably keen. Marriage rose around my island like a sea, and presently I was swimming.

"The transition was gradual. The thing had lain in wait within me for some time — an insidious, ostensibly innocuous trap that seemed fundamental to my very being. 'Within me'? Yes — though I still thought myself seductive, and all



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but ran through the streets unclothed, proclaiming my virility, it is never the dress that passion wears which does the business, but passion itself. I became passionately dutiful — that was all. Duty, which is another name and a frequent disguise for virility, became the conscious motive of all my actions. Integrity was behind me, do you understand? I was grown." He paused. "End of school and early marriage. Opening of Part Two."

Three alternately active points of light illuminated his listeners intermittently. Little Xena was now half sitting, half lying in Jay Anthony the Younger's lap. His arm was around her so tightly that she could hear the beating of his heart. Blatchford Symington, perched on his gin barrel, stirred from time to time.

"I was grown into this land of dutiful passion, then, and existed between clearly enunciated confusions. Life stood over me like a stern schoolmistress ordering my passionate thoughts. With a mistaken faith in love, I plodded on. I read Smith, who deplored independence and insisted marriage was the highest form of self-expression

but Smith himself joined marriage as an obscurer of the light. I read Jones, who neatly disposed of leadership — and behold! Jones was attempting to lead me. I did not think — rather I was the battle-ground for the thoughts of many men: one of those desirable but ignorant countries over which the great powers surge back and forth.

"I reached maturity under the impression that I was nurturing monogamous love to order my life for enduring happiness. Indeed, I accomplished the not unusual feat of anticipating all marital conflicts in my mind long before they presented



themselves to me in life — and of being beaten and bewildered just the same.

“After a few tastes of this bitter dish, I had had enough. ‘Here!’ I said. ‘Love is not worth the getting. It’s not a thing that grows up pleasantly around a maturing you — it’s a wall that an active you runs up against.’ So I wrapped myself in what I thought was my unassailable scepticism and decided that my education was complete. But it was too late. Protect myself as I might by neither creating new ties nor reinforcing the old with tragic and predestined womanhood, I was lost with the rest. I had traded the fight against falsehood for the fight against ambiguity, the fight against death for the fight against mere existence.”

He broke off to give emphasis to his last observation — after a moment he yawned and resumed.

“I suppose that the beginning of the second phase of my education was a rebellion against knowing I was being used in spite of myself for the inscrutable purpose of some greater being of whose ultimate goal I was unaware — if, indeed, there *was* an ultimate goal. It was a difficult adjustment. The schoolmistress seemed to be saying, ‘We’re going to play at being dutiful and being nothing but dutiful. If you don’t want to play at being dutiful, you can’t play at all —’

“What was I to do — the playtime was so short!

“You see, I felt that men were denying themselves the consolation — whatever their mere existence consisted of — that they were a part of Ethical Man endeavouring to rise from his knees.

“How could one not leap at such an optimism? Not grasping at it as a sweetly smug superior

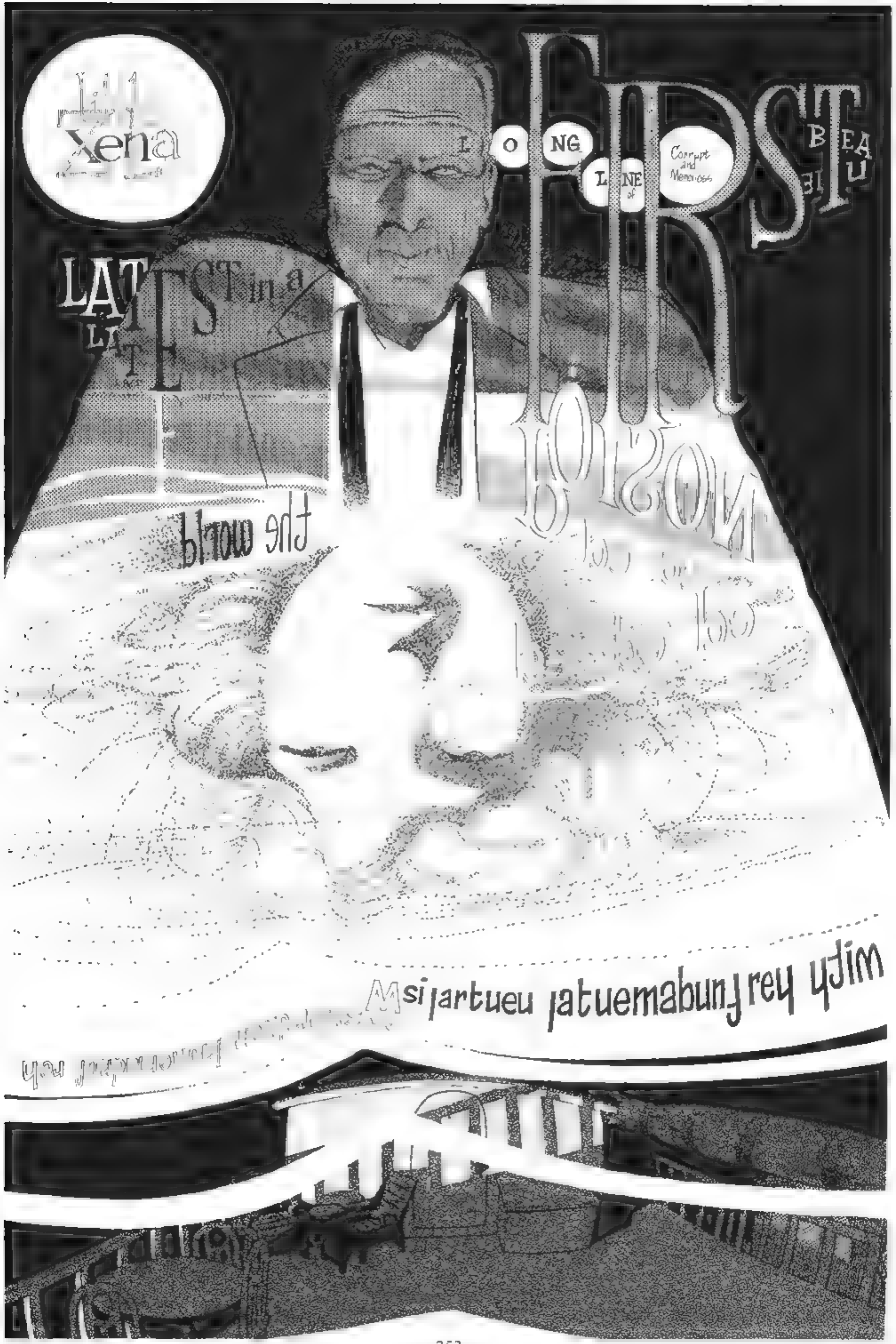
thing, but warming one's self before it: a truth comparable to an open bonfire on a winter's night. I did that. I was just warm enough for that, just alive enough for that.

"For it seemed to me that there *was* an ultimate goal for man. Man was endeavouring to move beyond his grotesque and bewildering rebellion against his own Creator — that divine and magnificent Creator who had allowed us, if we so chose, to willfully oppose him. Had allowed us to invent ways to rid the human race of the 'unnecessary' and thus strengthen the remainder to...what? To demonstrate to ourselves by the painful repercussions of our own rebellious actions that each form of rebellion merely reinforced the Creator's original and conscious lesson to us — that, in seeking to circumvent Him, we merely postpone the actuating of the highest gifts of enlightenment which we seek. In the morass of inversion and turmoil, I saw the evil endeavouring to mingle with the good — in Estarcion there was taking place a spiritual catastrophe to save one matriarchal mastery from the handful of divine inheritances that might organize things for ethical fulfillment.

"We produce a Cirin who can raise up all brides — and presently the bridal species is regarded as our highest achievement. If anyone can find a lesson in that, let him stand forth."

"There's only one lesson to be learned from life, anyway," interrupted Little Xena, not in agreement but in a sort of melancholy contradiction.

"What's that?" demanded Jay Anthony the Elder.



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LONG LINE of Corrupt and Menaces

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"That there's no lesson to be learned from life."

After a short silence Jay Anthony the Elder resumed:

"Little Xena, latest in a long line of corrupt and merciless beauties, first poisoned the world with her fundamental neutralism which I have struggled to escape; in which Jay Anthony the Younger could perceive no threat: that Little Blatchford Symington celebrated in his work."

There was a disgusted groan from the gin barrel.

Jay Anthony the Elder, grown accustomed to the dark, could see plainly the flash of Blatchford Symington's crimson eye and the look of resentment on his face as he cried:

"You're crazy! By your own statement I attained something by trying."

"Trying what?" whispered Jay Anthony the Elder. "Trying to merge the darkness of neutralism with the white light of the truth? Sitting day after day in a rigid chair removed from both life and faith, staring at a steeple through the trees and deluding yourself that by your own individual efforts you could separate, definitely and for all time, the knowable from the unknowable? Trying to take a factual circumstance and graft onto it some fanciful insight of your own, as if you might thereby restore to it that inexpressible quality it possessed in life and had lost in transit to paper or canvas?"

"Have *you* attained anything?"

Jay Anthony paused, and in his reply, when it came, there was a measure of spirit, a sweet overnote that lingered for a moment in those three







incarnations below him before it floated up and off like a butterfly bound for the stars.

"Perhaps." He said softly. "You see, I once aspired to be brilliant and chose, ultimately, to be merely tired. For all my talking and what little listening I have done — my intermittent and vain search for the eternal singularity that seems to lie just beyond every circumstance and every speculation — to that grand enterprise I have added not one jot — save, perhaps, the parenthetical admonition that it is to be attained neither through the mere aspiration to brilliance nor through the choice to be merely tired."

In the distance a deep sound that had been audible for some moments resolved itself into the plaintive lowing of three cows widely separated... one... from one... from another in the pasture beyond the river. As if in reply, the thick timbers of a distant bonfire shifted, sending a stream of sparks and cinders skyward, illuminating a distant point on the horizon.

"Not one jot!" Again Jay Anthony the Elder's voice descended upon his auditors from above. "What a feeble thing our belief in circumstance has proven to be, with its random steps, its waverings, its paces to and fro, its disastrous retreats. Belief in circumstance is a mere instrument of neutrality — neutralism itself, in fact. There are people who say circumstance must have built the universe — why, circumstance never built so much as an anthill! The eternal singularity built the anthill — and the universe as well. Circumstance, coincidence, happenstance are the names we give to our own rebellions against our Creator — a short glossary of terms by

which we define our seemingly infinite failures of faith.

"I could quote you the philosophy of the day — but, I assure you, a hundred years will see a complete reversal of this abnegation that's absorbing humanity at this present and fleeting hour: the perceived triumph of Cirin over the eternal singularity — " He hesitated and then added: "All that I believe — the pre-eminent importance of the eternal singularity to men, and the necessity to acknowledge this same importance to myself — the lovely and poisonous Xena was born deprecating: choosing, instead, to celebrate the hedonism of knowing naught but herself.

"Well, now I've told myself something of my education, haven't I? Nothing of what I actually learned, of course, and very little even *about* myself. It is my choice that I should die with my lips sealed and the guard on my fountain pen — as all men who have chosen to be tired have done since — oh, since the advent of failure itself in a certain matter — a strange matter, by the way. It concerned a sceptic who thought he was far-sighted, just like myself. I shall tell myself about him in place of an evening prayer before we all drop off to sleep.

"Once upon a time, all spirit and creation were of one belief — belief in the eternal singularity. But it infuriated His first creation, as spirits and creations multiplied, that he — or *she*, some say, and that is my preferred interpretation as well — that *she* would lose her pre-eminence as the first of the eternal singularity's creations. So the eternal singularity said to him — or to her:

"Let us join together to make a superb metaphor that will endure for all time in

celebration of our dual natures. Let us incarnate the poetry of eroticism in two beings — our mutual delight made flesh — two beings who will replicate themselves in an endless propagation of our precious and seminal first love for one another. Through their replication, let them know some small part of the joy I felt when first I said “Be” and you were. By the sign of these two, the most extreme of fabulists, the very keenest of satirists will find indisputable that, in the beginning, I was One and then created another — no matter how great a distance from us each successive replication finds itself across the greatest spans of time and space.

“Finally, let us take care always that we hold these two in the same highest regard which we shall always have for one another.”

“But the first creation, in a fit of pique, declined to participate, for he — or she — worshipped the eternal singularity and knew himself — or herself — to be incapable of worshipping another. So it was that this first creation, embittered by his — or her — own misunderstanding, made of that misunderstanding a lie, and then made the lie into many lies, preposterous lies, wounding lies.

“Blasphemous lies.

“But the superb metaphor lived on, so beautifully had it — they — been created by the eternal singularity. ‘Male and female, created he them.’ And though all this happened across centuries beyond the ability of any man to number, it continues even unto this day, and each newly propagated metaphor, by the grace and mercy of that eternal singularity, is free to choose to be as in the beginning — of one belief with the





very earliest spirit and creation: believing in the eternal singularity — or to choose to willfully misunderstand and, thus, to believe in— and propagate—any number of preposterous, wounding, and blasphemous lies.”

When Jay Anthony the Elder was finished, there was silence. Some weighted glamour awake in the night air seemed to hold them in its sway.

“As I promised, I have told myself the story of my education. But my gin is gone and a new dawn threatens over the horizon, and soon there’ll be an awful jabbering going on everywhere, in the fields and on the river and in the three small cabins on the deck below, and there’ll be a great running up and down upon the earth for a few hours — Well,” he concluded with a laugh, “thanks to me, we four can all pass to our eternal damnation knowing we have left the world largely unaffected by our passing.”

A breeze rose up, blowing before it small wisps of autumnal death which flattened against the river.

“Your observations grow preposterous and wounding,” said Jay Anthony the Younger, sleepily. “You anticipated a miracle of integration as the result of saying rambling and inconclusive things in exactly the setting you would choose to restore your own fictitious singularity. Meanwhile Little Xena has shown her own far-sighted scepticism by falling asleep — I can tell by the fact that she now concentrates the entirety of her weight upon my broken body.”

“Have I disappointed you?” inquired Jay Anthony the Elder, looking down with some concern.







"No, you have bored me. You've shot a lot of arrows, but did you shoot any birds?"

"I leave the birds to Blatchford," said Jay Anthony the Elder pointedly. "I have addressed myself to my counterpart at the confluence of all vectors of perceived circumstance."

"You can get no rise from me," muttered Blatchford. "My mind is full of any number of earthly things. I want a warm bath and bed too much to worry about the importance of my work or what proportion of us are pathetic figures."

Sunrise made itself known in the gathering blueness eastward of the river and in birdsong multiplying in the nearby trees.

"Not much longer to wait," sighed Blatchford. "Look! Two gone." He was pointing to Jay Anthony the Younger, whose lids had sagged over his eyes. "Sleep of the Diver family —"

But in another few minutes, despite the cacophony of chirrups and trillings, his own head had fallen upon his chest once, twice...

Only Jay Anthony the Elder remained awake, seated upon his stateroom roof, his eyes wide open and fixed with renewed intensity upon the vanishing point of morning. He was wondering at the reality of ideas, at the rising radiance of existence, and at the solitary absorption into which he was flying, warily, like a bird into a ruined house.

He was sorry for himself now. Later in the morning there would be his writing, and then a girl of a superior class who was now his whole life. These were the nearest things to pleasure which he knew. In the clarity of the brightening day it seemed presumptuous that with this feeble,

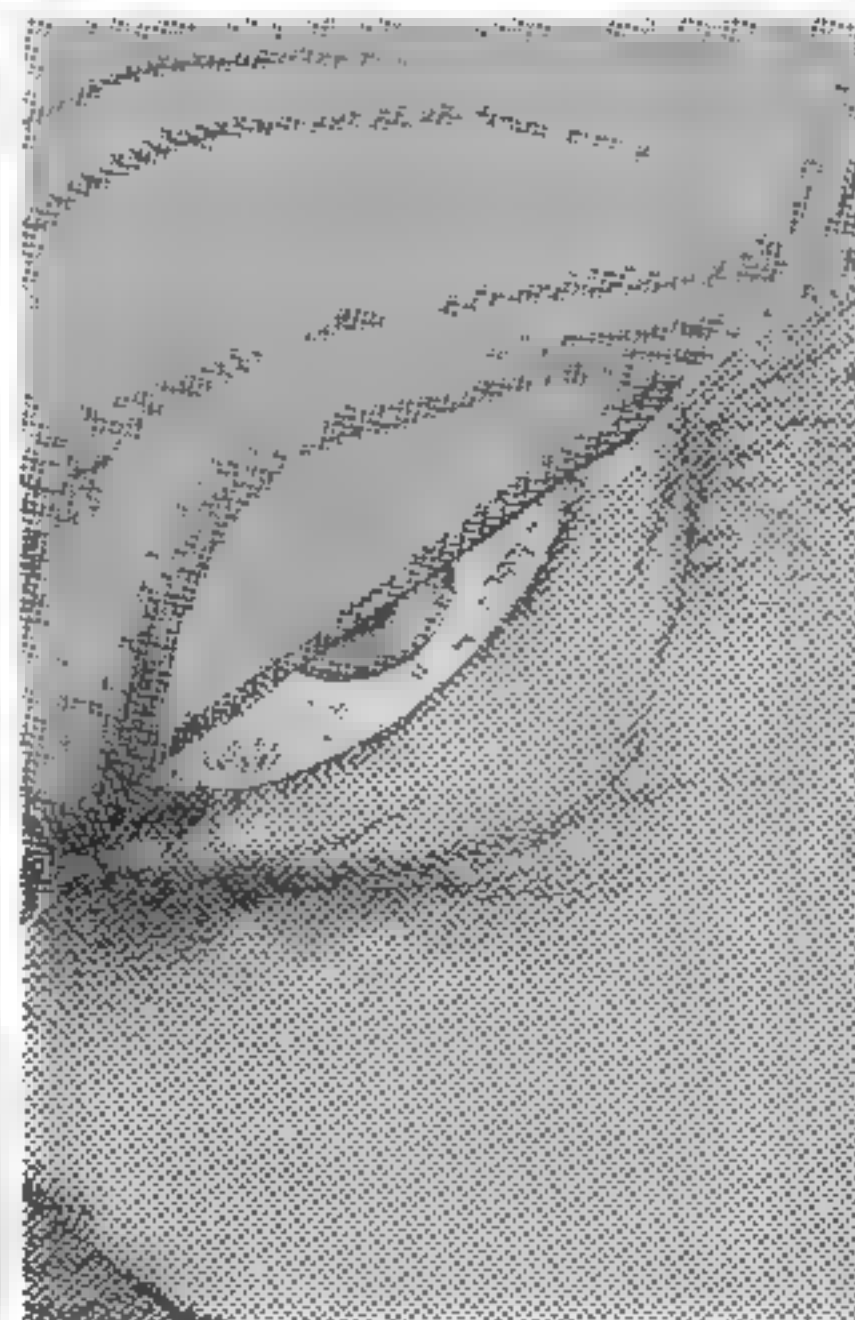
broken instrument of his heart he had ever tried to love.

There was the sun, casting new, rippling, and radiant waves of warmth. There was life, active and intrusive, moving below him — thin wisps of smoke from the kitchen below, a crisp “mark twain!” and a bell ringing. Confusedly, Jay Anthony the Elder saw eyes at the railing staring curiously up at him, heard Little Xena and Jay Anthony the Younger in animated controversy about whether he should go with her — then another clamour and the three men, two of them small and fading ghosts, were seated alone atop the stateroom gazing mournfully at the spot where she had disappeared.











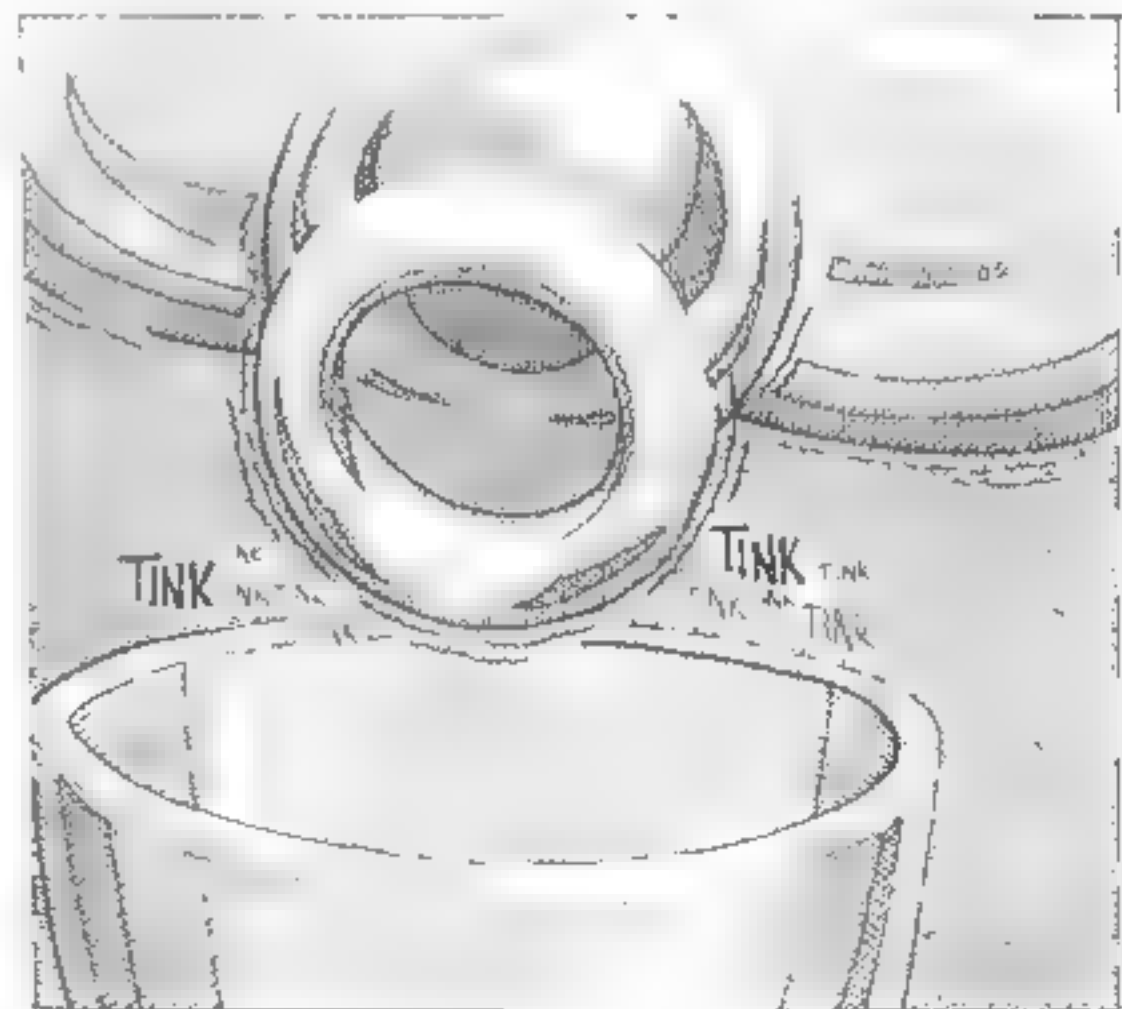




### CHAPTER III

#### THE BROKE AND LOOT

In the mornings, JAY ANTHONY DIVER awoke (always) to exhaustion, anxiety, and apprehension. The purple chill of early sunrise and the gilded brilliance of mid-morning (alike) left him unmoved. It was for a brief period only (each day) in the renewed warmth and false dawn of his first high-ball that his mind turned to those opalescent dreams of a pleasurable future (birthright of the blessed; delusion of the damned). A brief period. As he plunged, headlong, into his inebriated state, the dreams faded and he became a confused apparition, searching out odd nooks in the corners of his mind, filled with malignant insights, plumbing sodden and dispirited depths.

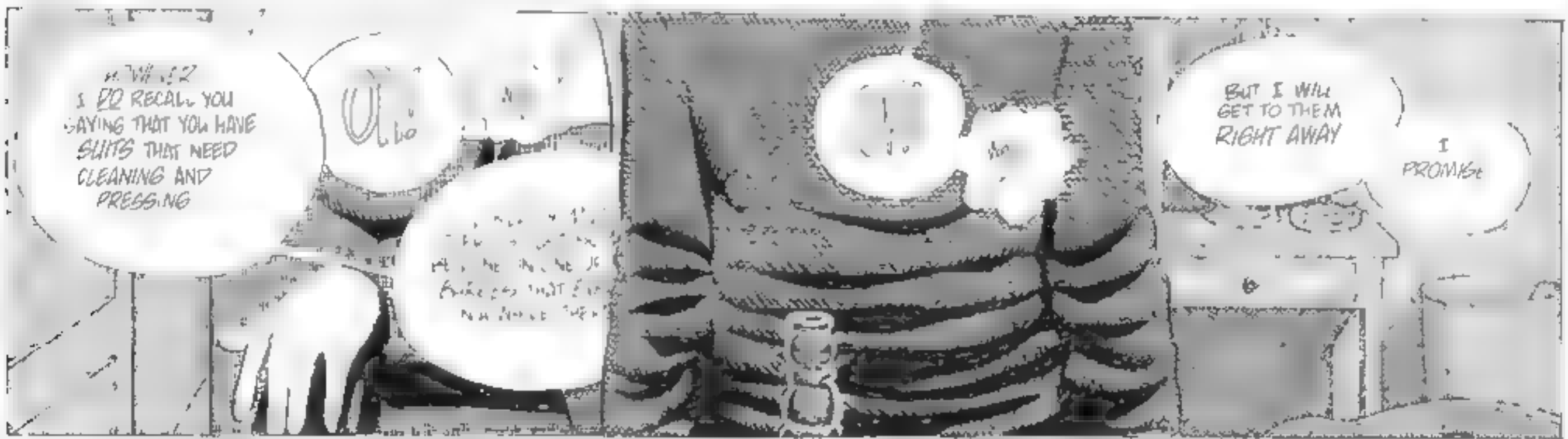
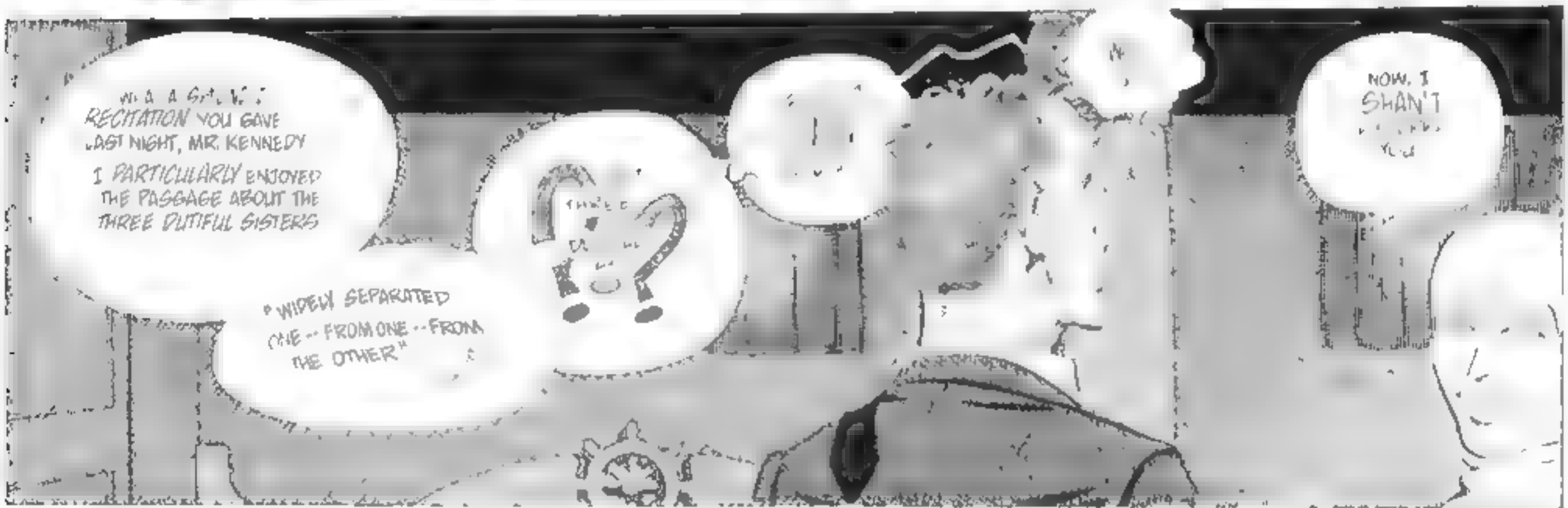
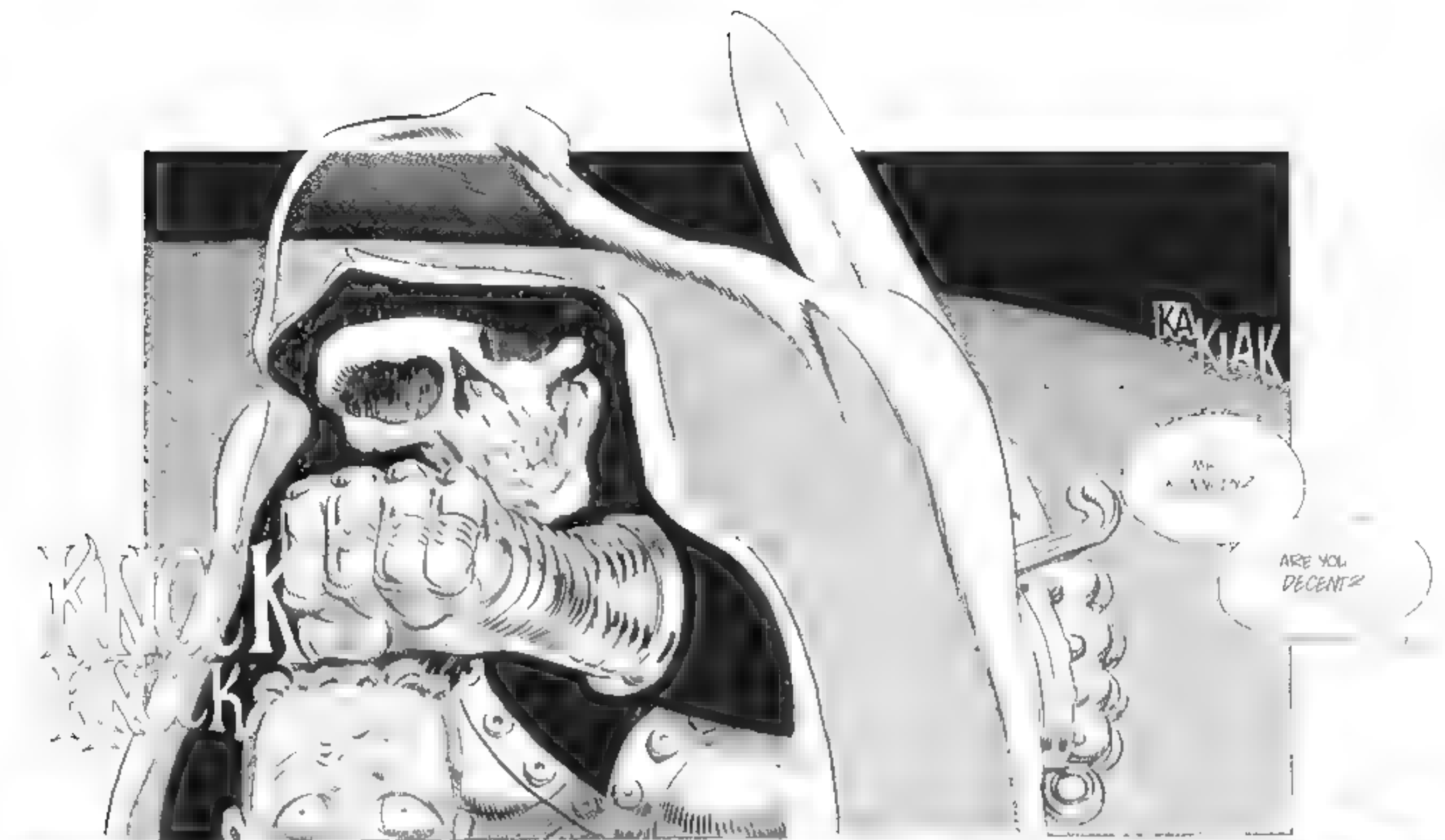


### CHAPTER III

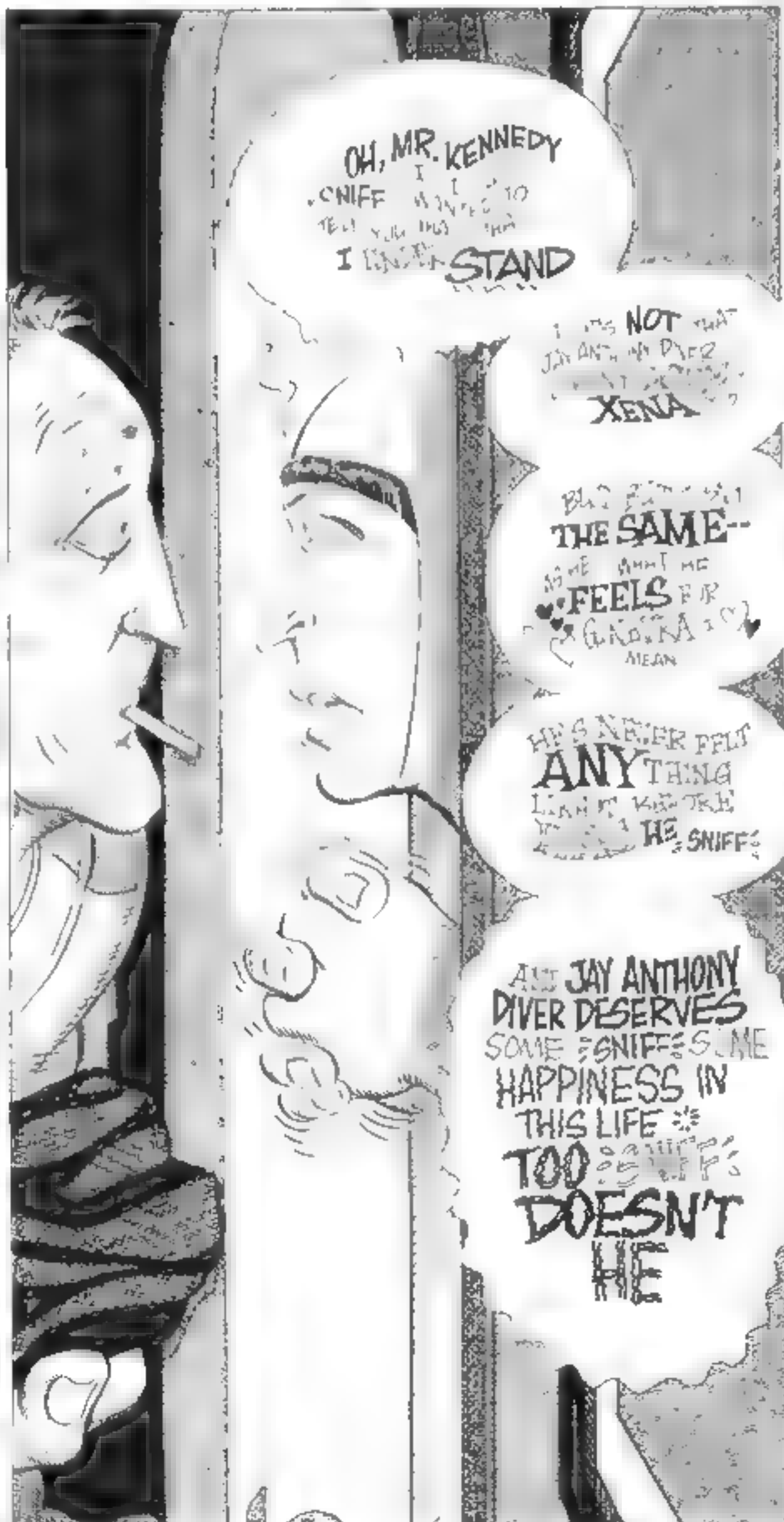
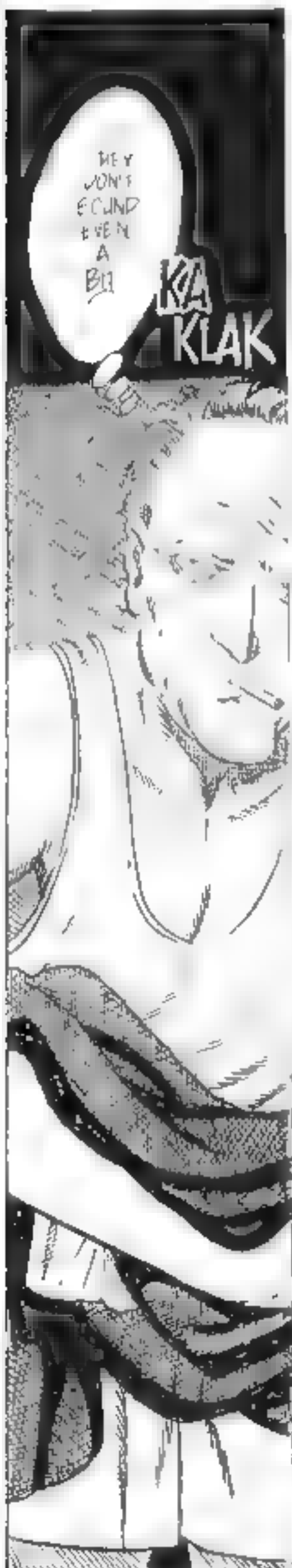
#### THE BROKEN LEWD

There was horror in the stateroom opposite. It had slithered after them and insinuated itself in their quarters like a malignant intruder, pervasive in the cramped confines, gradually spreading across the few pieces of furniture until it oppressed their very sleep. GINEVRA and JOZAN would now hate to be there alone. Where once it had seemed so cozy and intimate, appropriate to GINEVRA'S stylish clothing tossed here and there on chair and bed, it now seemed to mock them, the very rustling of the curtains whispering maliciously:

Ah, my ill-fated young lovers, yours is not the first passion and intimacy that has withered here under the gray autumn skies...generations of unsuspecting couples have watched in that mirror the abrupt dissipation of their fragile happiness...many times has love come into this stateroom adorned in pastel hues of joy and left it in the gray cerements of despair...a long nights many have lain awa d pouring out waves of share darkness

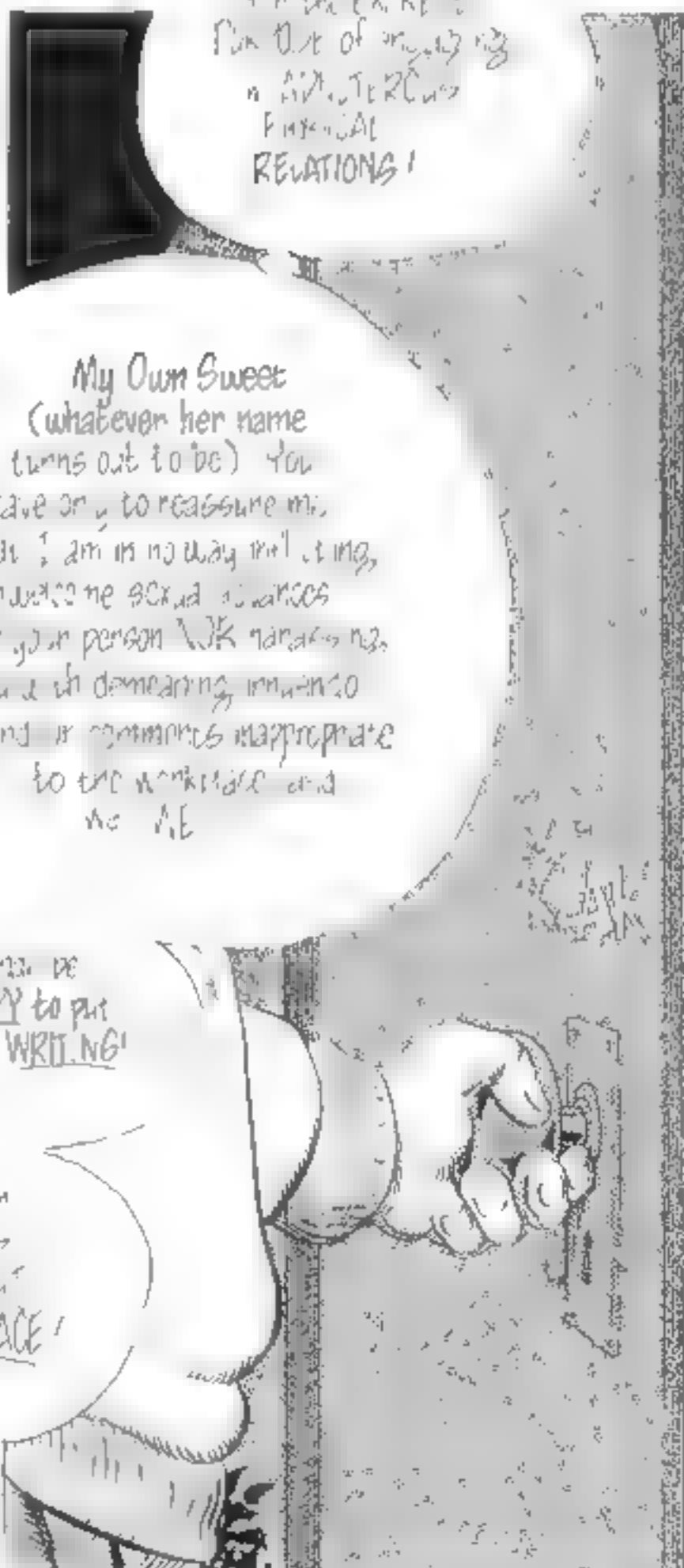
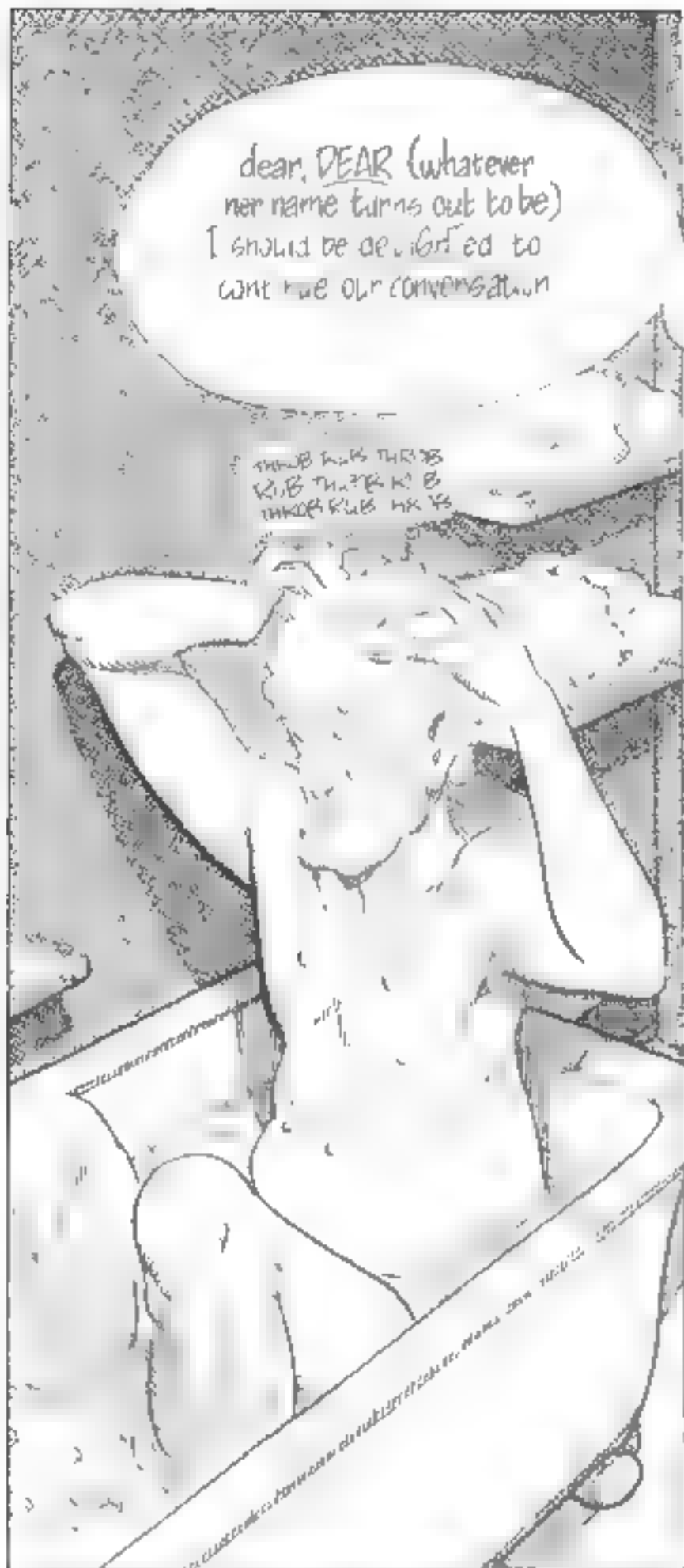


















MISTER  
KENNEDY

WHATEVER

LITERARY



INTEREST YOU  
MAY HAVE  
AROUSSED

N MY JUNIOR  
COLLEAGUES I  
CAN ASSURE  
YOU NEITHER  
I NOR THEY  
WOULD CONSIDER  
JEOPARDIZING  
OUR GOOD STANDING  
N MAJARCHAL  
SOC ETV



FOR THE  
SAKE OF A FEW  
SWEATY.  
HORIZONTAL.  
MINUTES.

WITH A  
WRINKLED.  
UP.



BALDING.

POT.  
BELLIED.



PREMATURELY.  
AGE-ED.  
ROUE.  
WHO  
STINKS.

MR.  
KENNEDY.



OF GIN. AND  
CIGARETTE  
SMOKE.

TWITCH



AS FOR MERRILL,  
HONOURS THE PRINCESS  
OF PALM, MR KENNEDY,  
I SUGGEST THAT YOU

--**CAREFULLY**--

CONFINE YOUR FABULIST  
DELUSIONS TO THE PAGES  
OF YOUR NOVEL.  
**FOR..**



W. E. T IS AN OPEN  
QUIST IN AS TO WHETHER  
"JAY ANTHONY DIVER'S UNHEALTHY  
INTEREST IN "GINEVRA DOES NOT CONSTITUTE  
AN **ACT OF ADULTERY**  
ON THE PART OF  
**FRANCIS STOP**  
**KENNEDY...**



IT IS **EQUALLY** AN OPEN  
QUESTION AS TO WHETHER  
IT **DOES**. AS, KENISE IT  
REMAINS TO BE DECIDED IF  
THE **MASSION** OF  
THE **MONJURE** OF  
ADULTERY IN THE  
PRINTED PAGE

IS TO BE  
**PUNISHED**  
WITH THE **SAME**  
**SEVERITY** AS THE  
**CRIME** ITSELF.



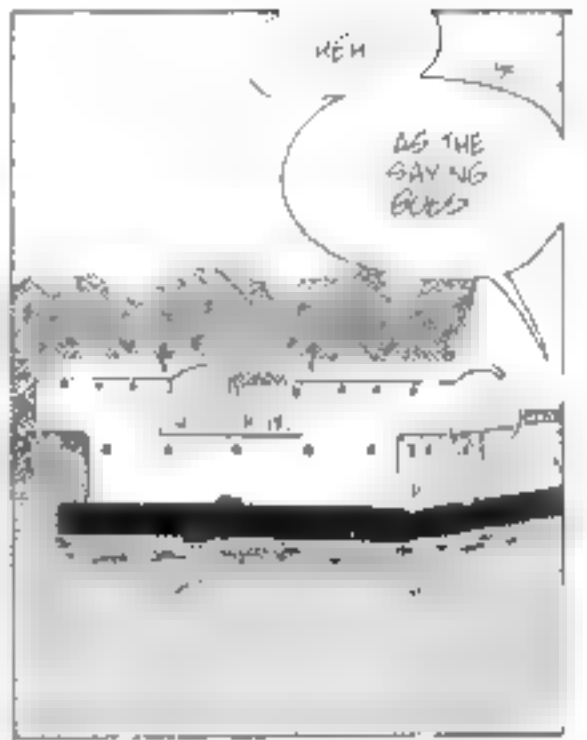
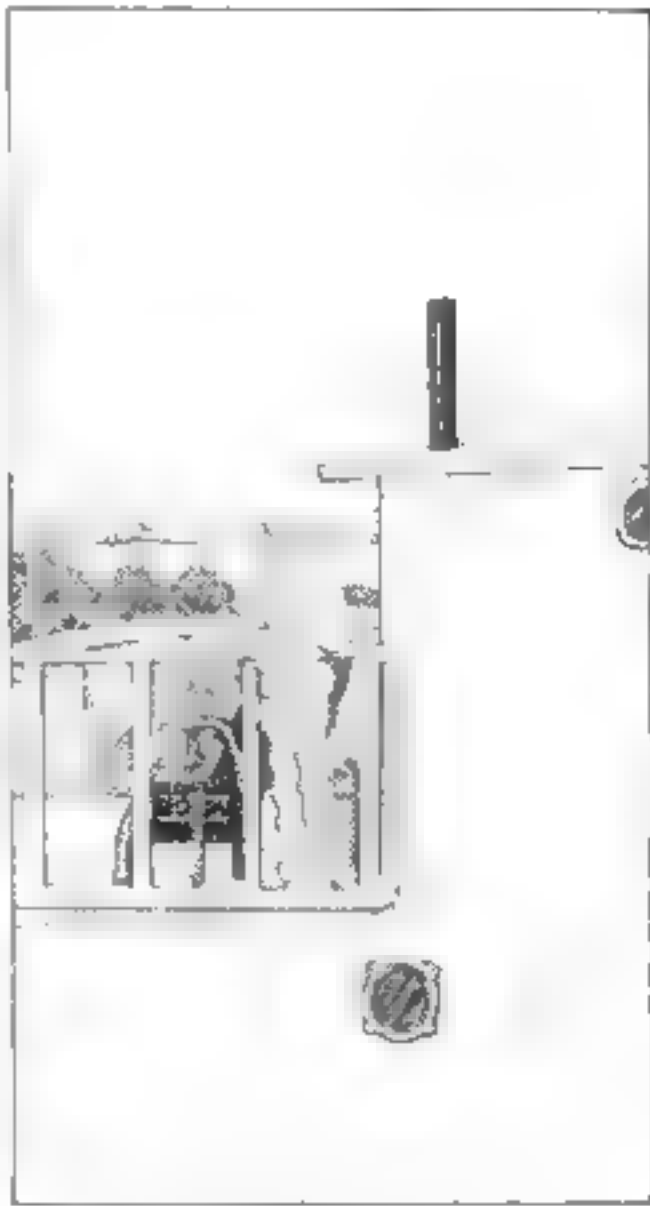
HAVE I MADE MYSELF  
**CLEAR,**  
MR KENNEDY?

**SPLendid.**

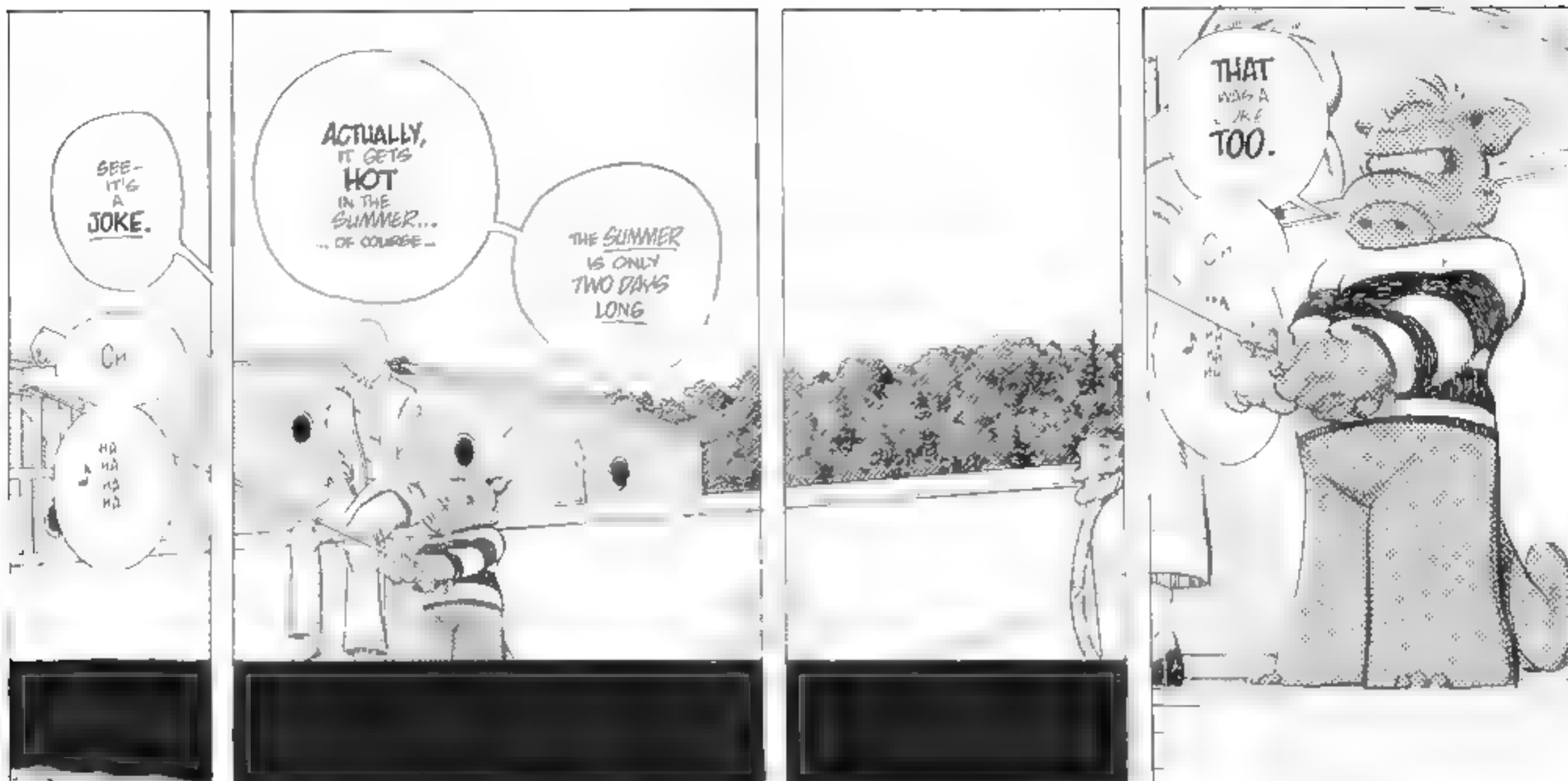
I SHALL LEAVE YOU,  
THEN, TO ENJOY THE **BALANCE**  
OF THIS **UNSEASONABLY**  
**WARM DAY.**

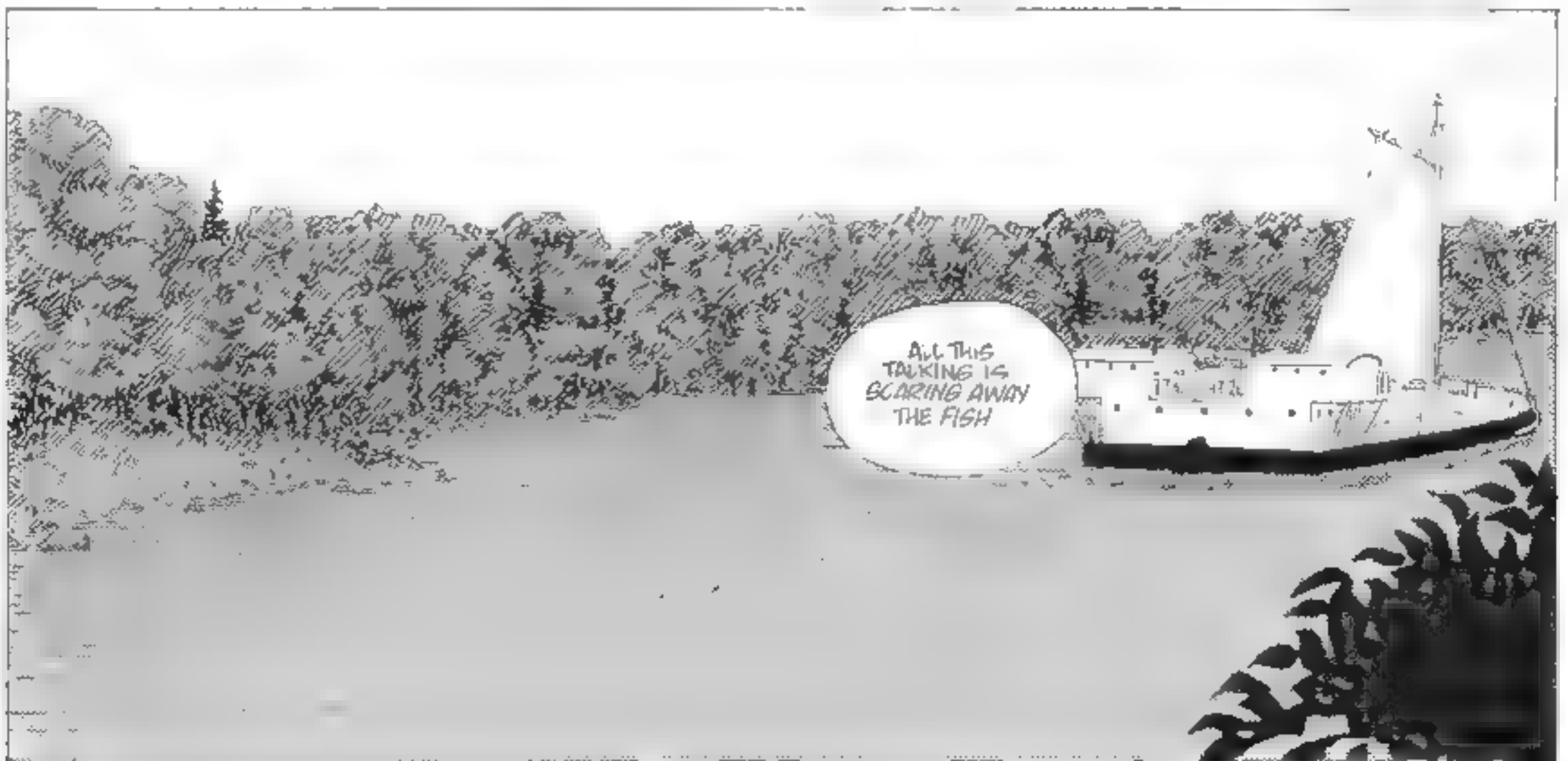
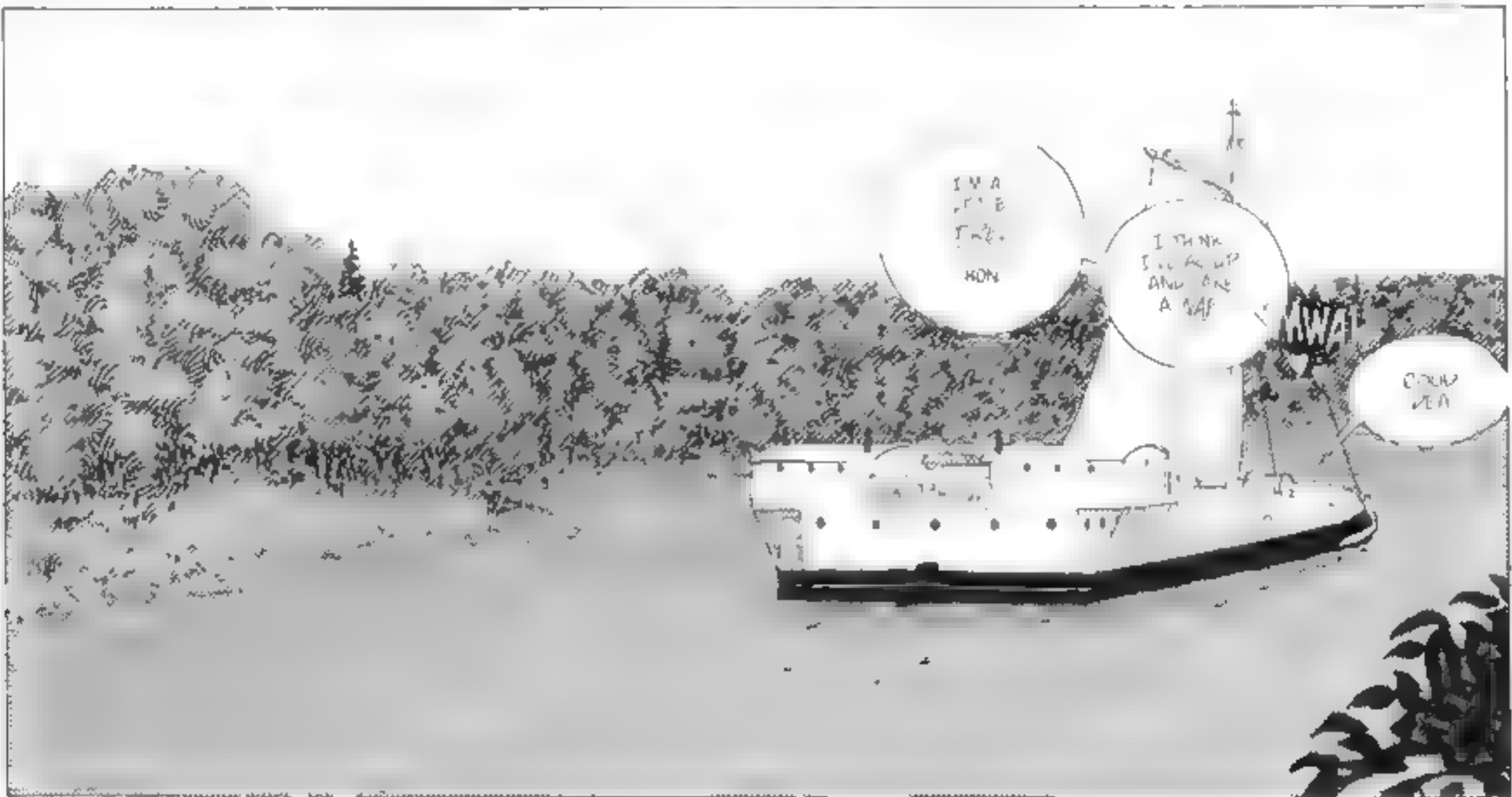
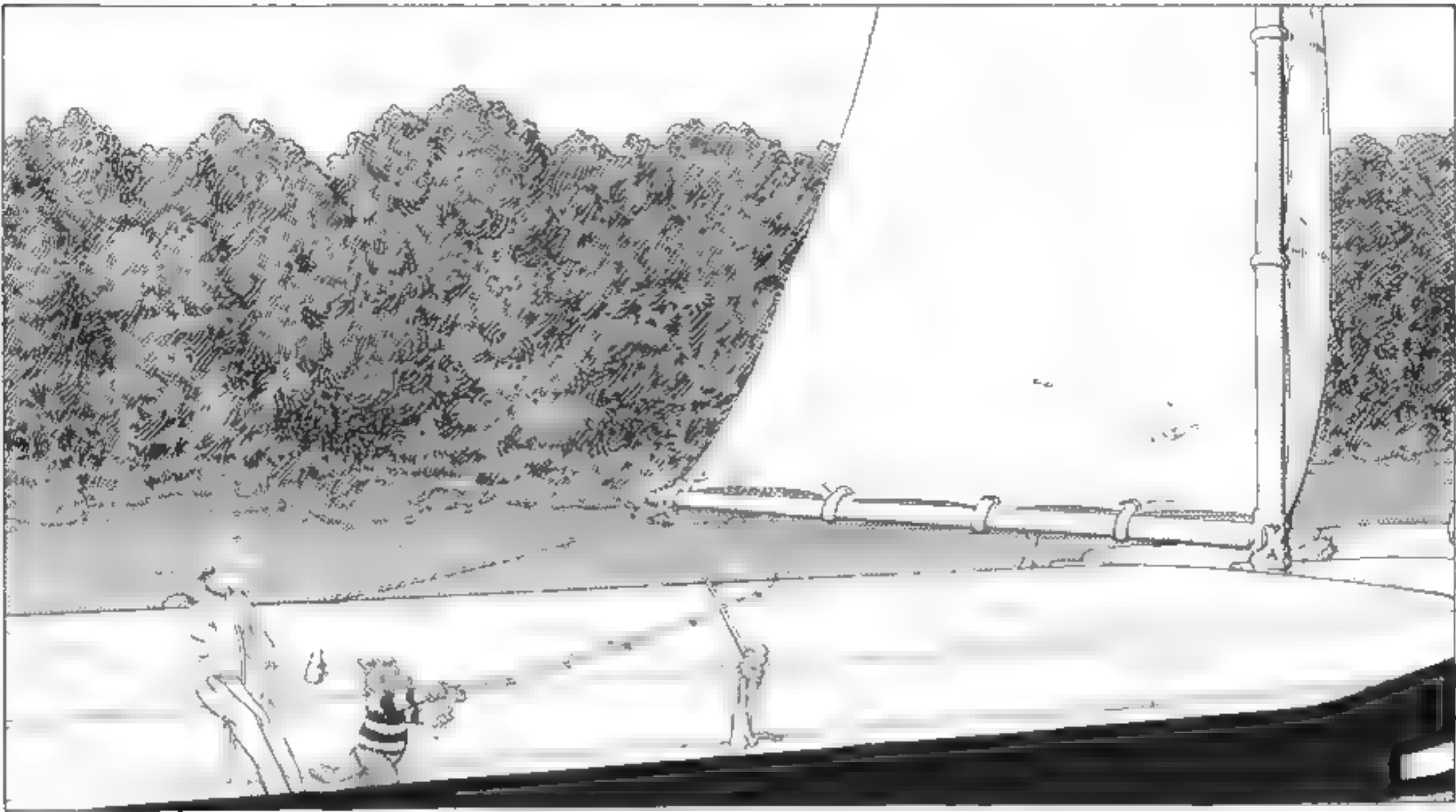
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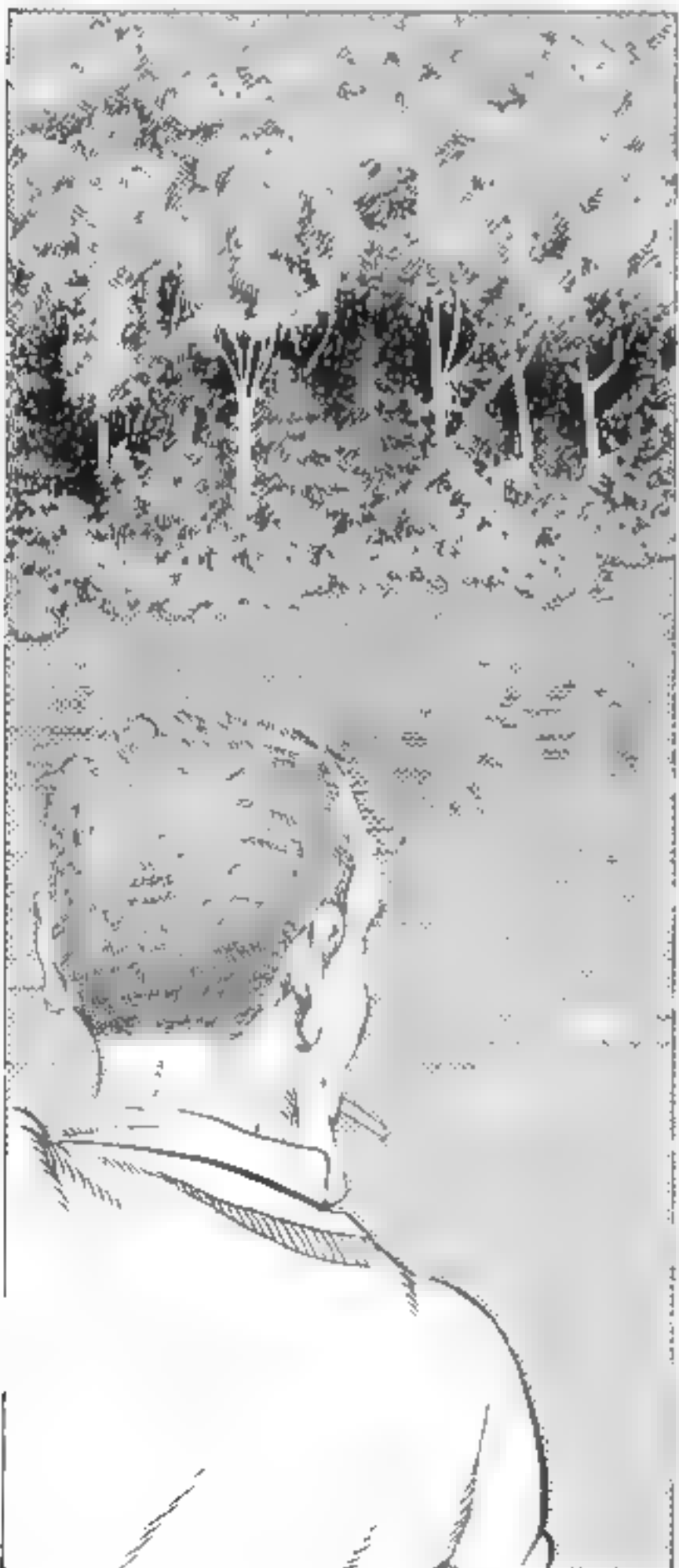
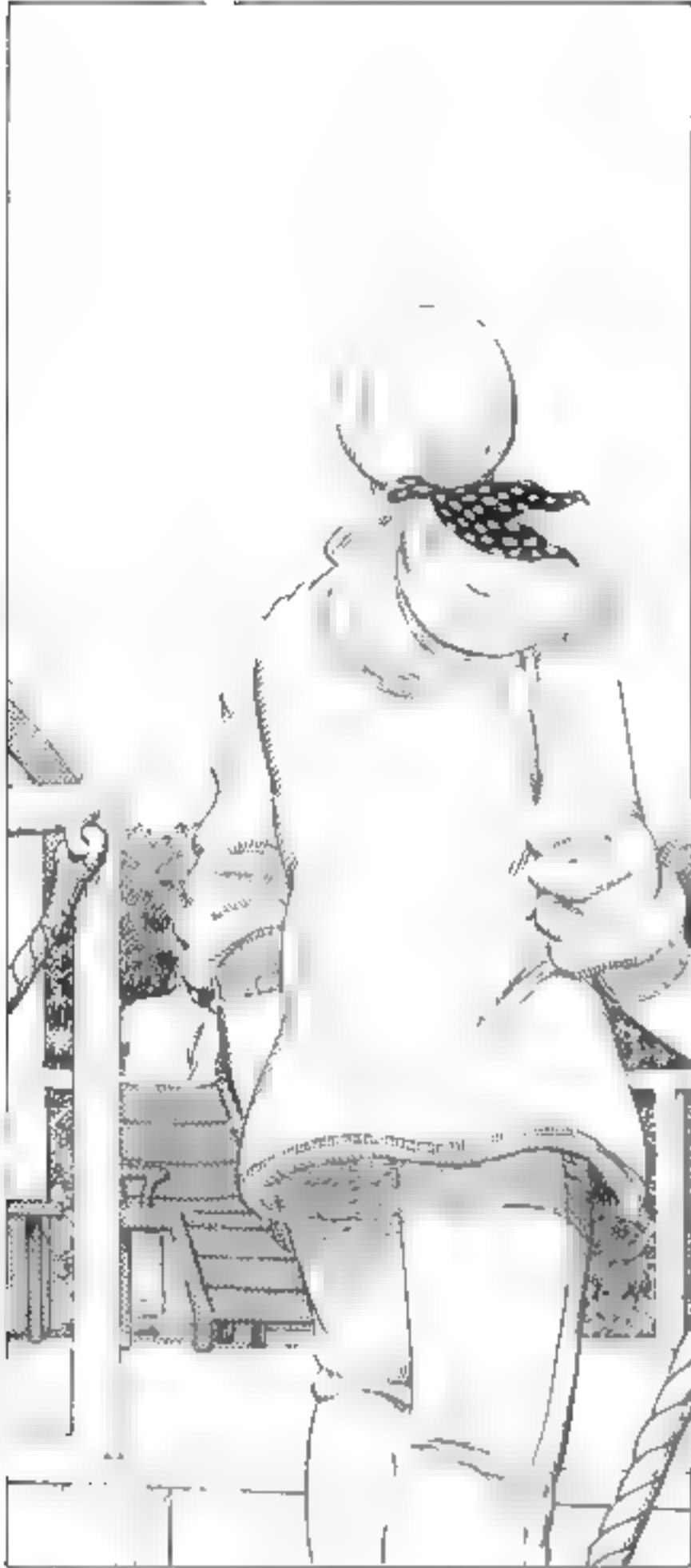
kind  
of you













MEALC isn't  
anything...

... or  
anywhere.

from which it derives  
its ANCESTRAL name --  
MEALC e'NAJen'WAL  
"PALMS which FLOWER  
From the SEA

It is accessible  
ONLY from the northEAST

Along the coast  
at rough-hewn jetties  
which tumble, crookedly,  
into ... luminous and  
azure waters ...

Upon ONE of these cliffs  
 is the artists' colony which  
 I mentioned to you before --  
 Chateau Euterpe, as it is known --

enclosed within a  
 lovely, grassless garden --  
 the garden bounded on ONE  
 side by the Chateau itself  
 from which it  
 flows...and INTO  
 which it RUNS

on W. side  
 by the sea  
 & the cliff

and on  
 the cliff

by a  
 cliff

to the sea

by  
 the sea

to the  
 sea



A SEA as mysteriously coloured  
as the agates and cornelians of  
childhood...

...green as  
green milk...

...  
darkly  
dark...

pure  
dark

Delicate mazes  
of the mind  
in the sea...

...  
...  
...

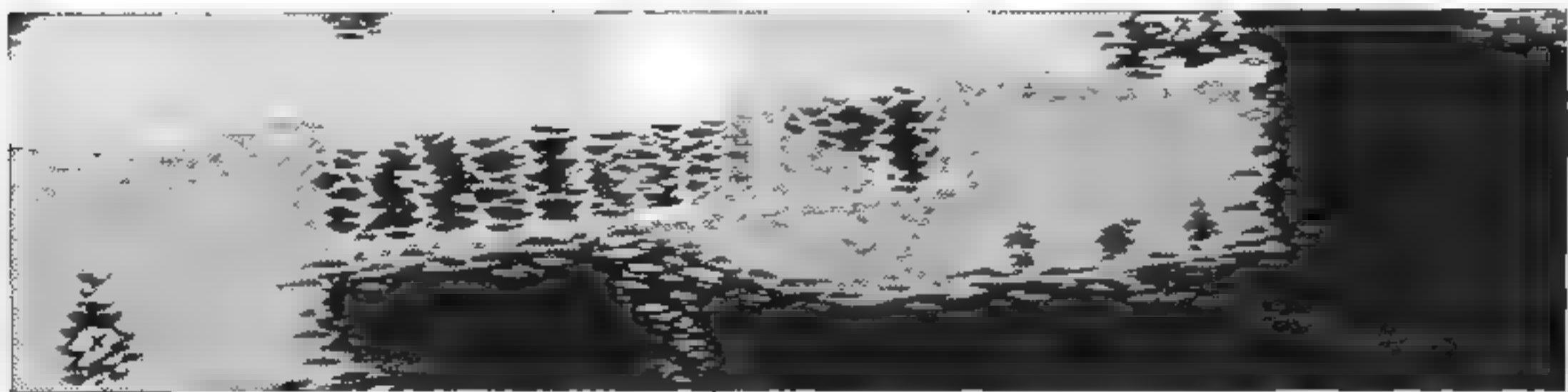
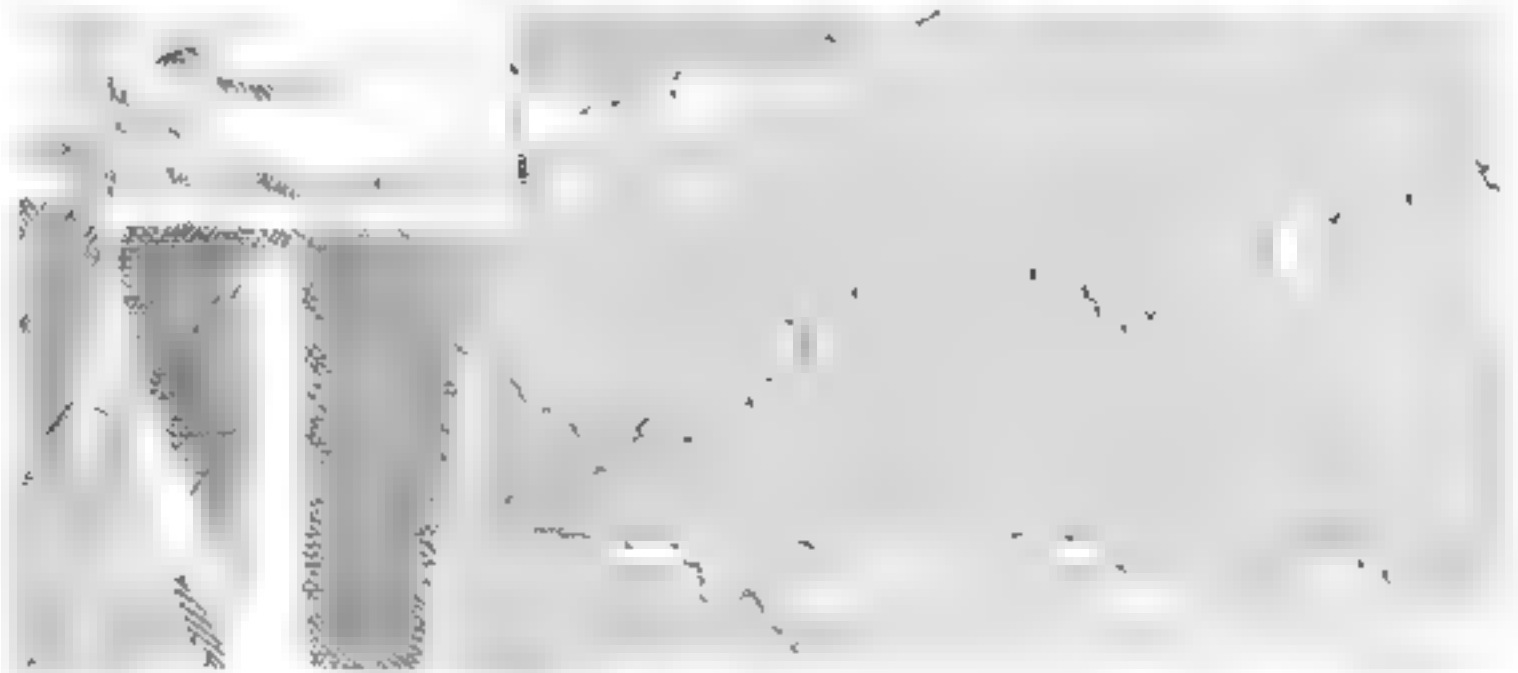
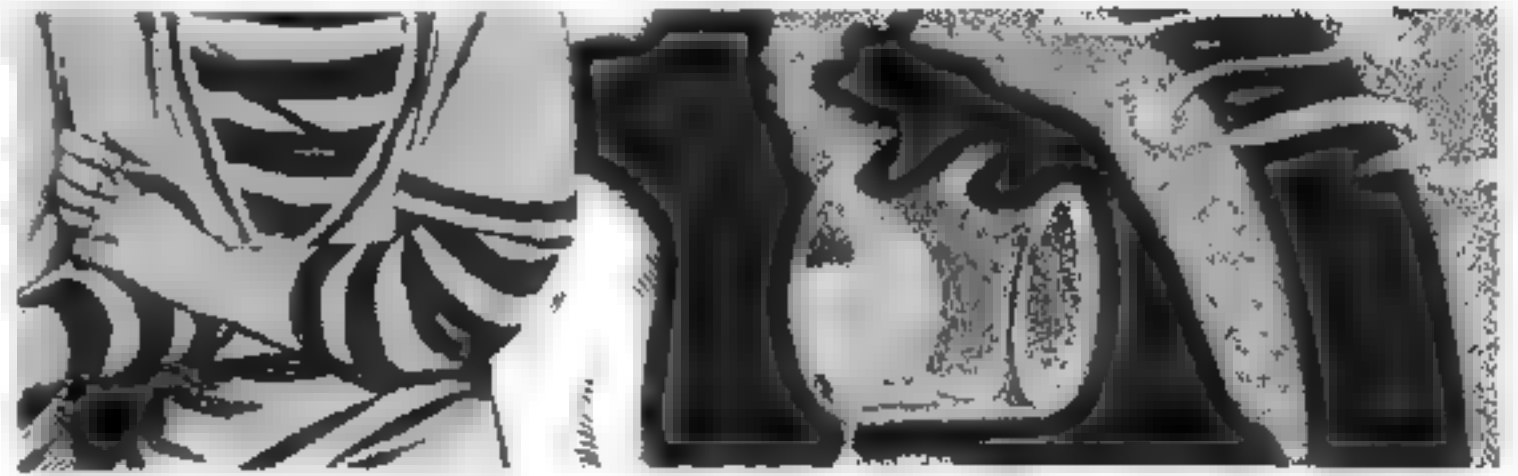
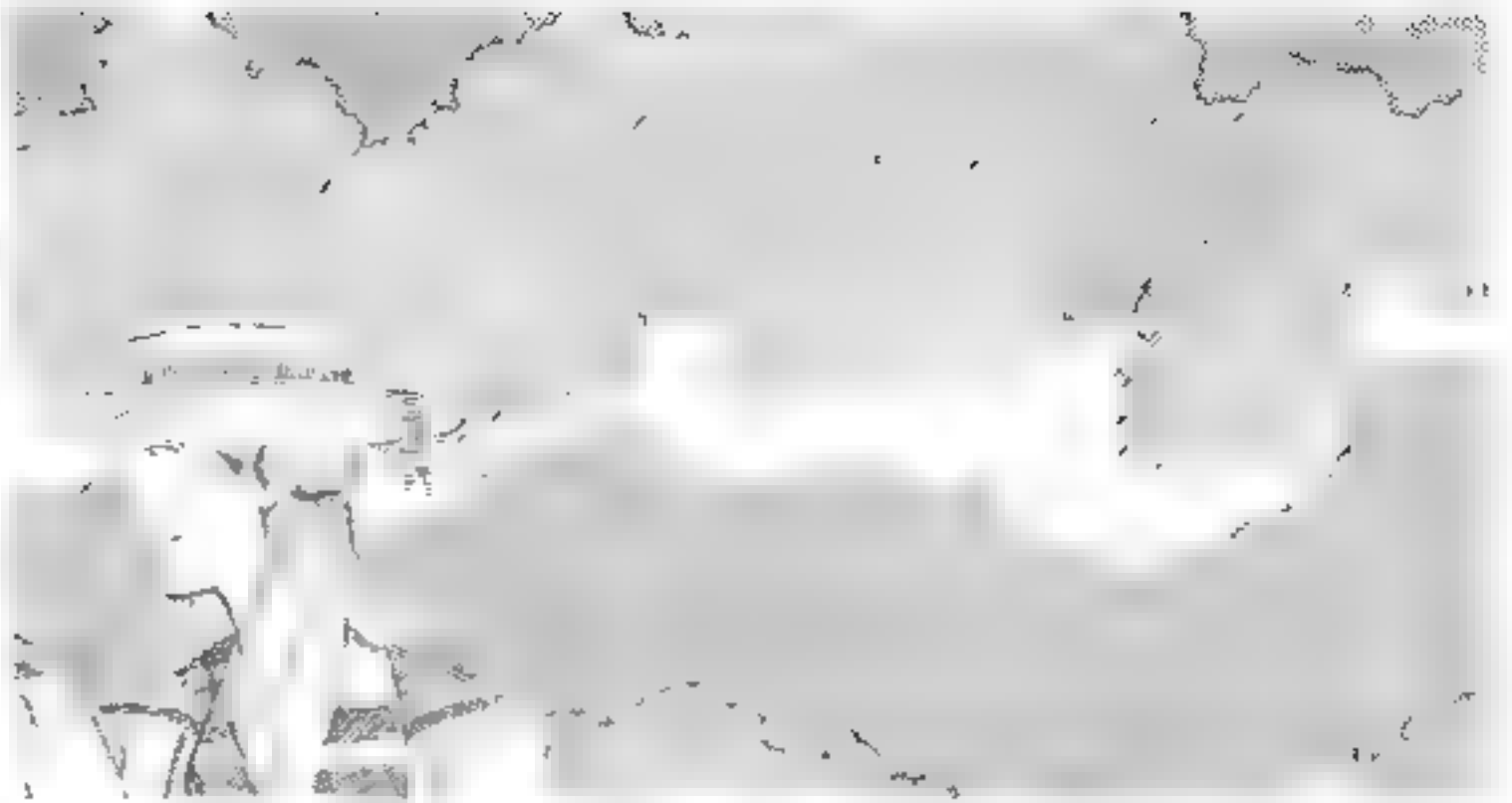
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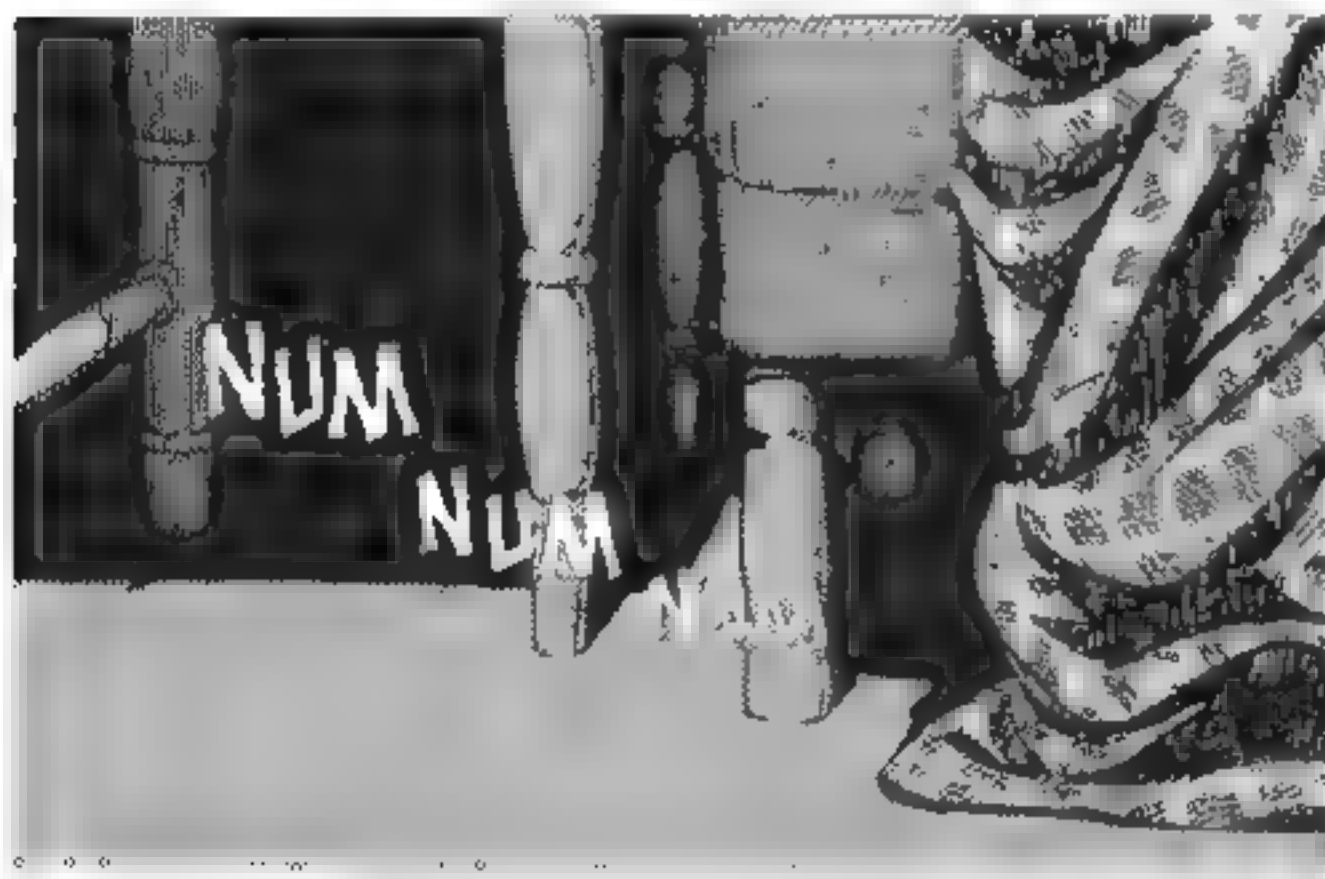
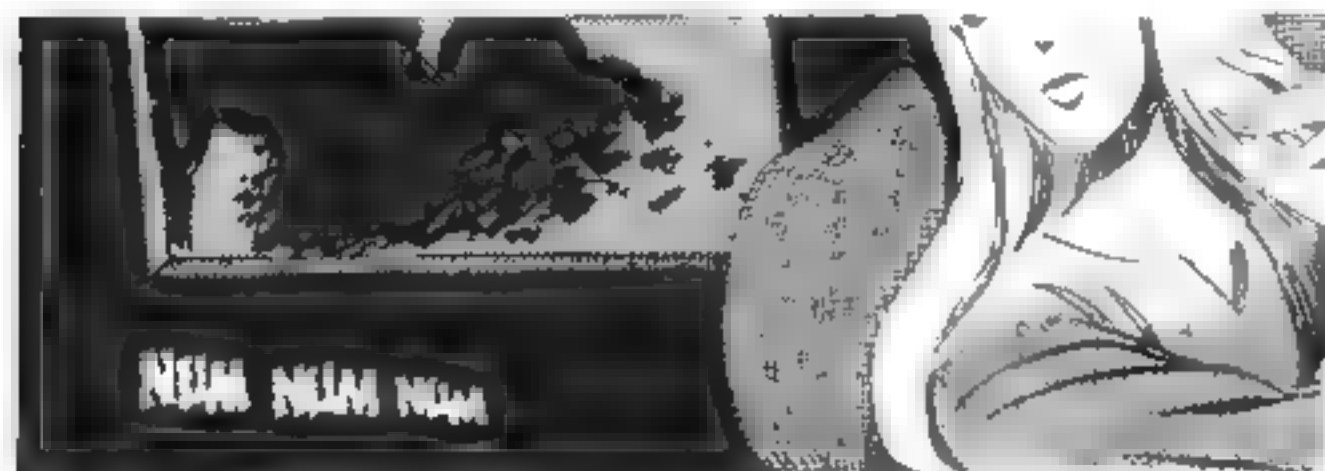
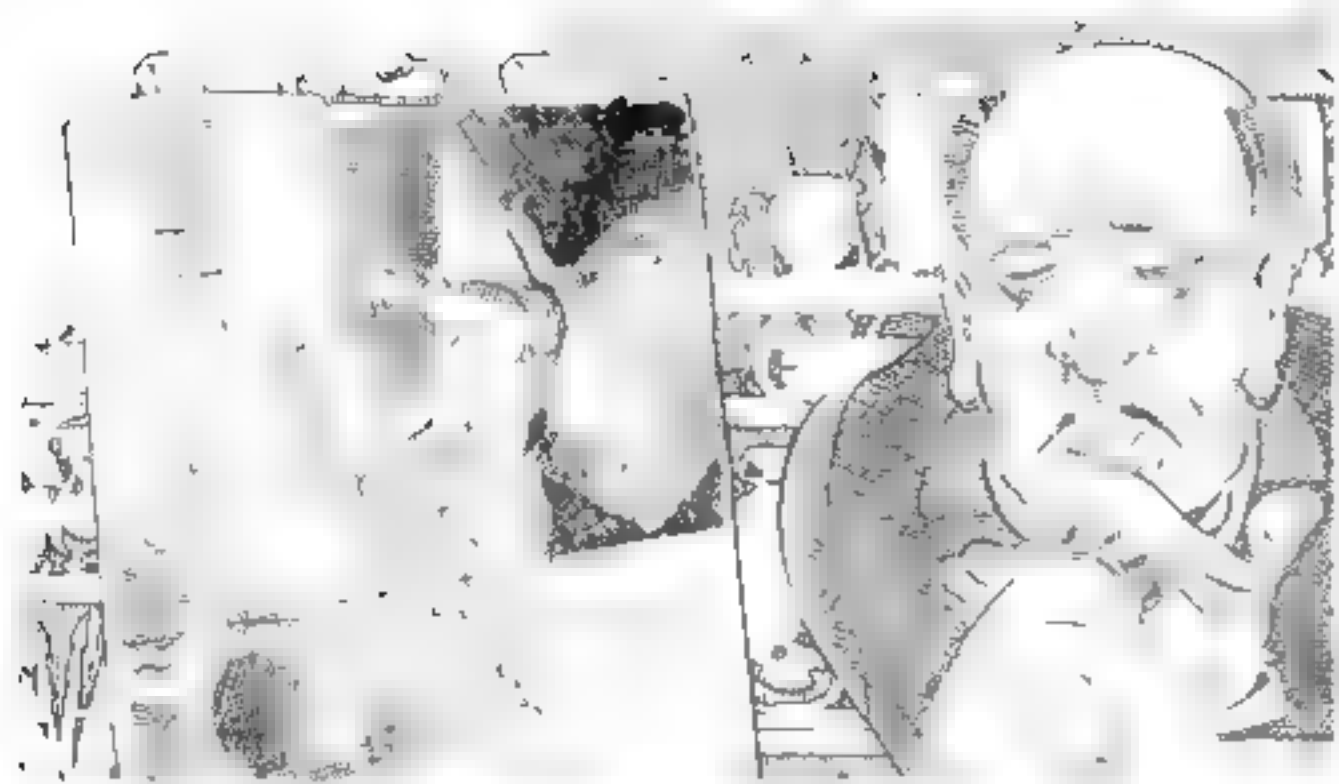
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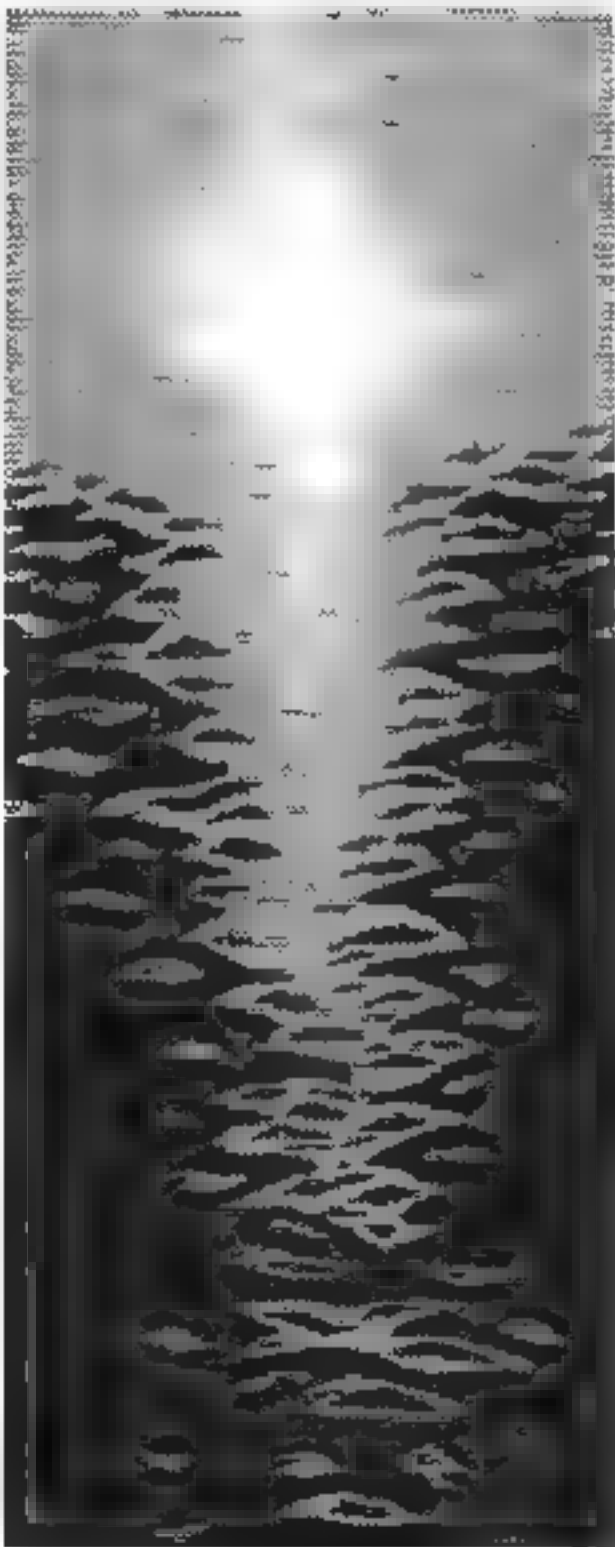
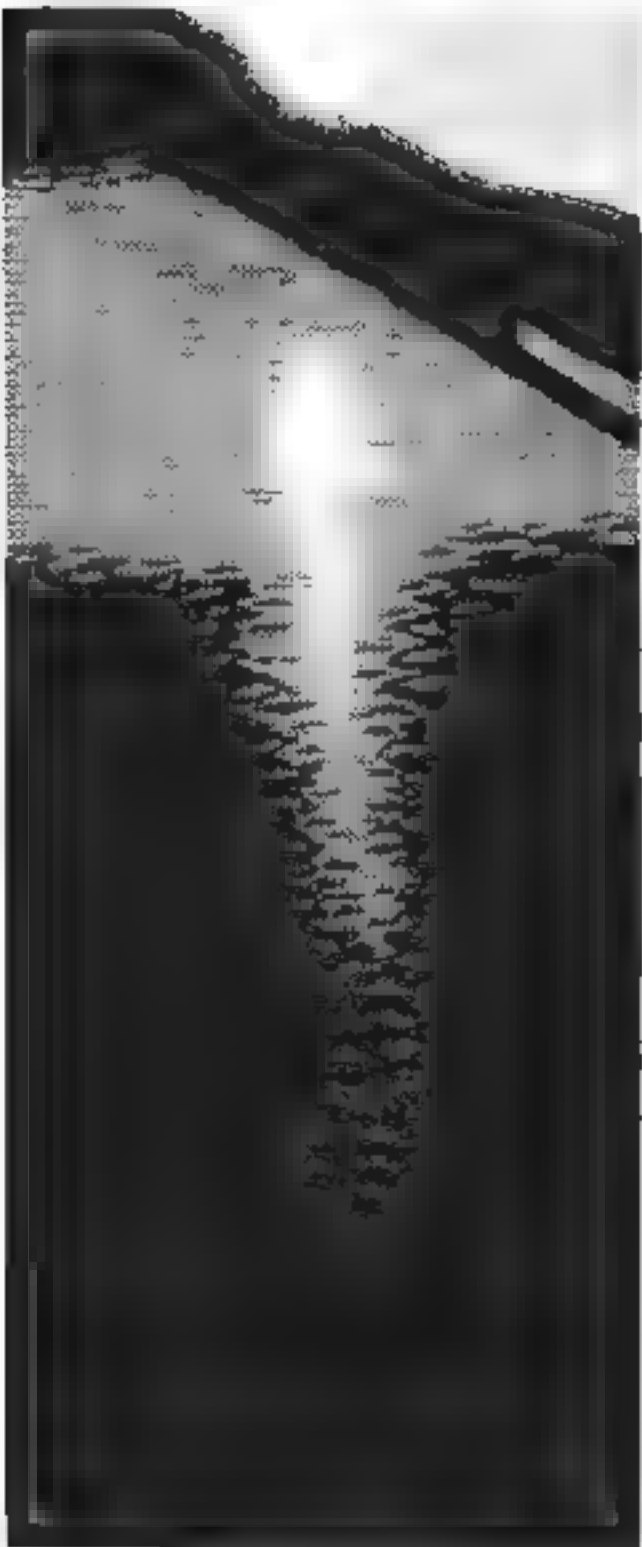






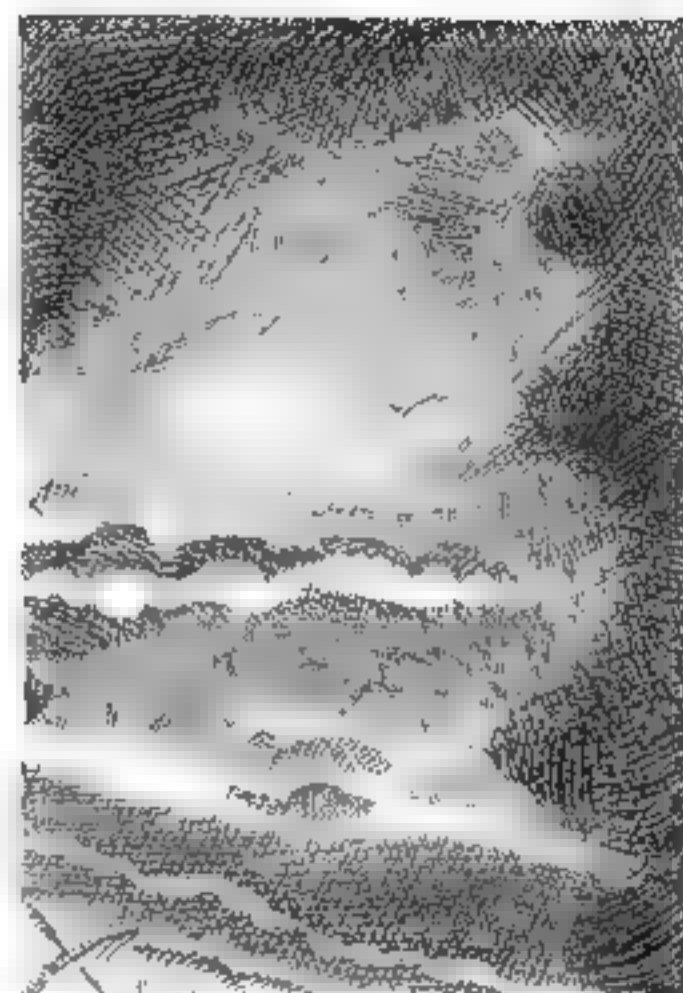






She was  
the tongue of flame  
that made the  
firelight  
vivid.

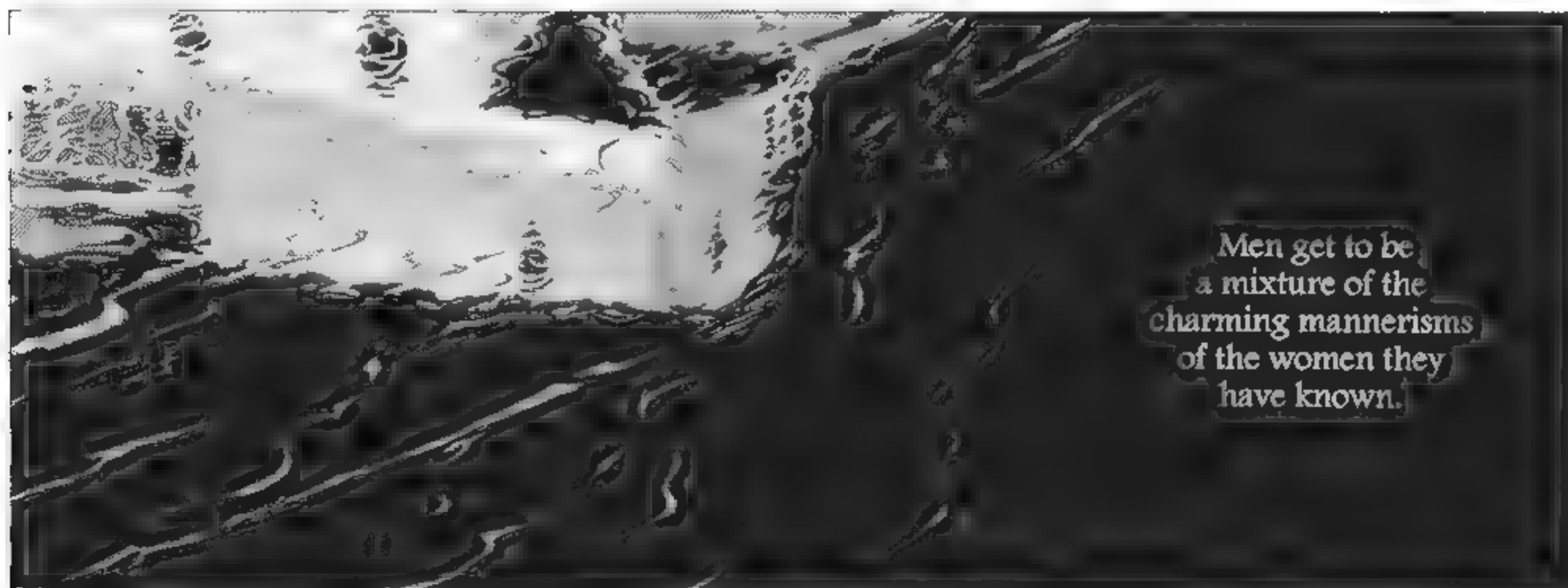
Passing within  
the radius of a  
girl's perfume



She comes up to people when she meets them,  
as if she were going to kiss them on the mouth, or  
walk right through them, looking them straight in the  
eyes—then stops a bare foot away and says her  
Hello in a very disarming understatement of a voice.  
This approach is her nearest to Gloria's personality.  
Gloria's was always a vast surprise.

Her voice and the drooping of her  
eyes when she finished speaking,  
like a sort of exercise in control,  
fascinated him. He had felt that  
they both tolerated something,  
that each knew half of some secret  
about people and life, and that if  
they rushed toward each other,  
there would be a romantic  
communication of almost  
unbelievable intensity.

*sketcha sketcha sketcha Sketcha  
Sketcha sketcha sketcha sketcha  
Sketcha sketcha sketcha Sketcha  
sketch sketch sketch sketch sketch  
sketcha sketcha sketcha sketch  
sketcha sketcha sketch  
Sketcha Sketcha sketch*



Men get to be  
a mixture of the  
charming mannerisms  
of the women they  
have known.



A few little unattached sections of her sun-warm hair blew back and trickled against the lobe of the ear closest to him, as if to indicate that she was listening.



She carried space around with her, into which he could step and be alone with their two selves.



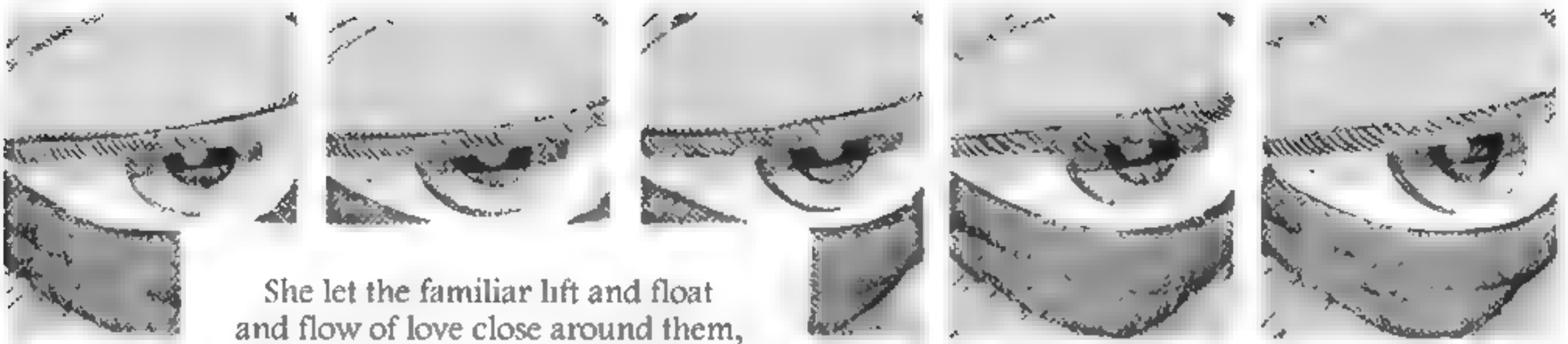
*sketcha sketcha sketcha sketcha  
sketcha sketcha sketcha sketcha  
sketchsketchsketch sketcha sketch  
sketch sketch Sketcha sketch  
sketch sketch sketcha sketch  
sketcha sketcha sketchsketcha  
sketcha sketcha sketchaskech*

They talked from their hearts with the half-truths and evasions peculiar to that organ, which has never been famed as an instrument of precision.



Her low voice wooed him casually from some impersonal necessity of its own.





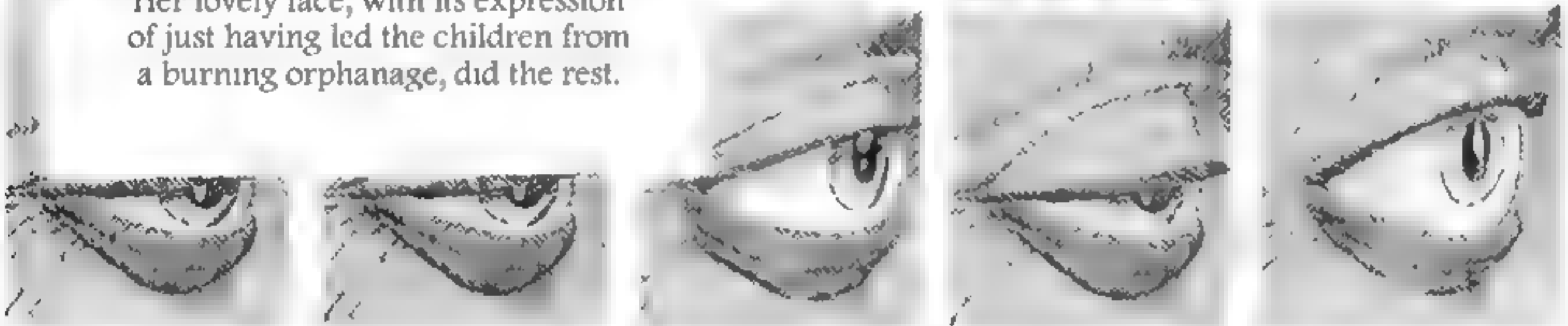
She let the familiar lift and float  
and flow of love close around them,  
pulling him back from his  
faraway uniqueness

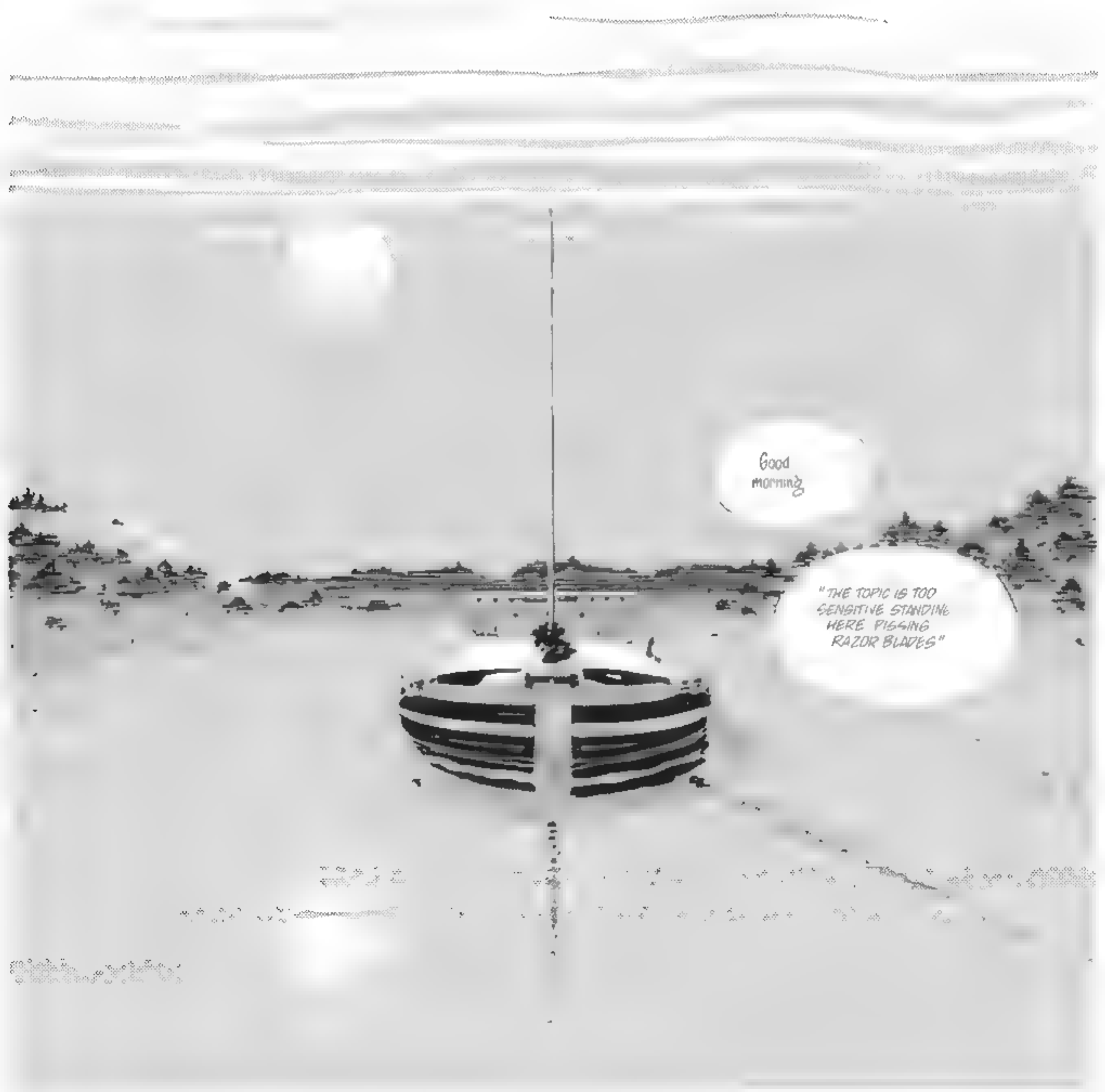
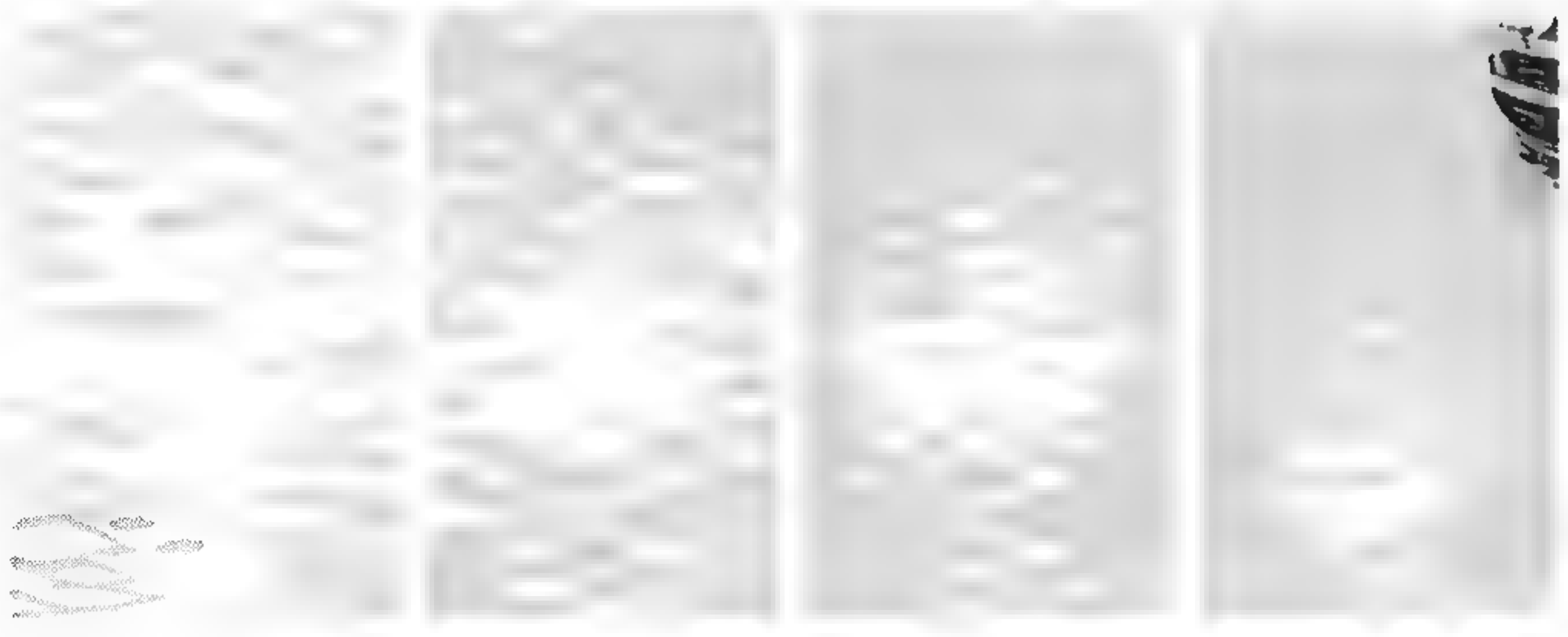


Her eyes shone at him with friendly interest,  
and then she did something else with them  
narrowed them a little and then widened them,  
recognizing by this sign the uniqueness of  
their relationship. "I see you," they seemed  
to say. "You registered. Everything's possible."



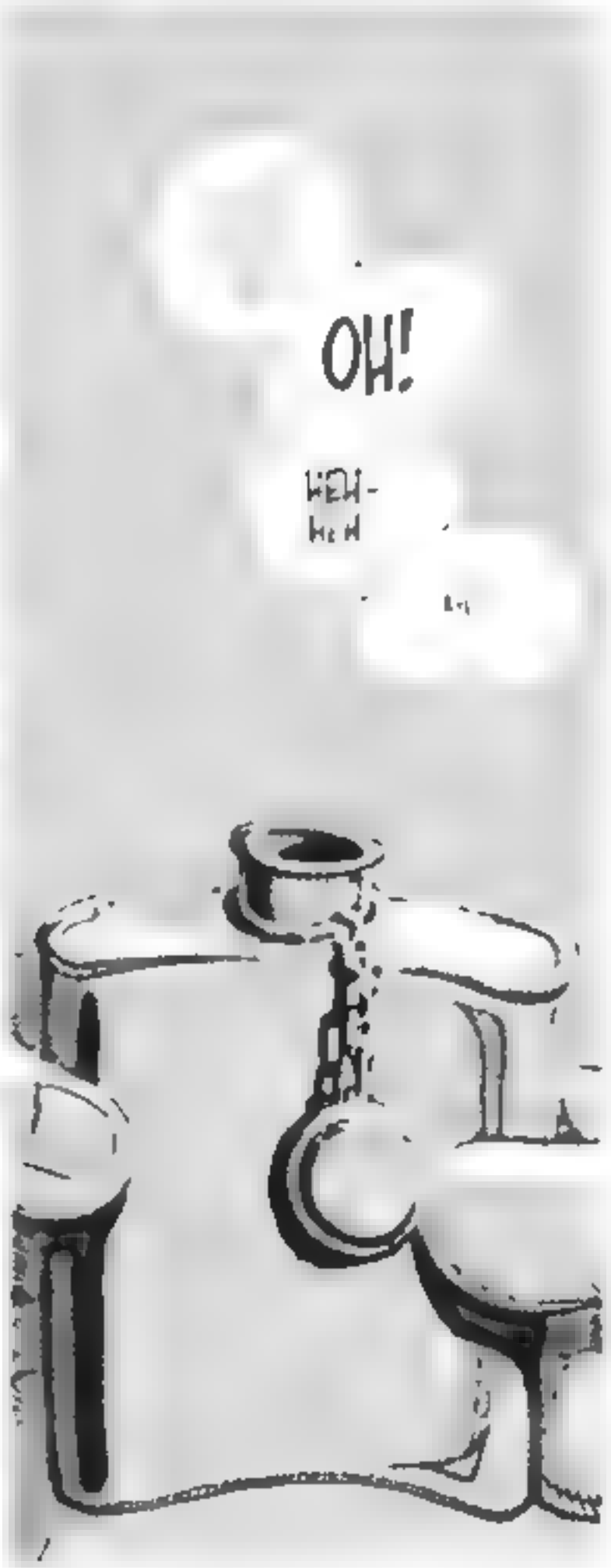
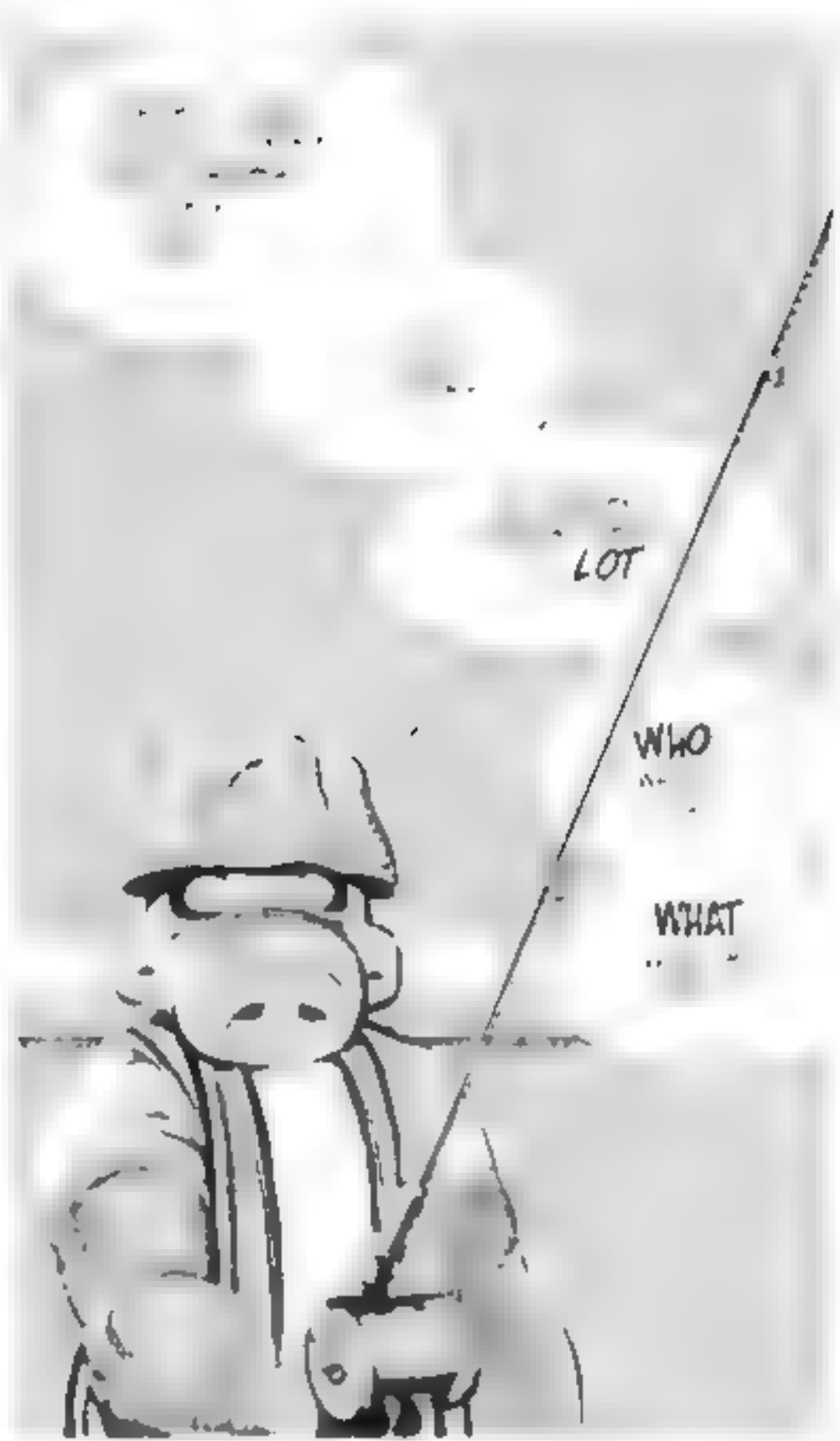
Her lovely face, with its expression  
of just having led the children from  
a burning orphanage, did the rest.

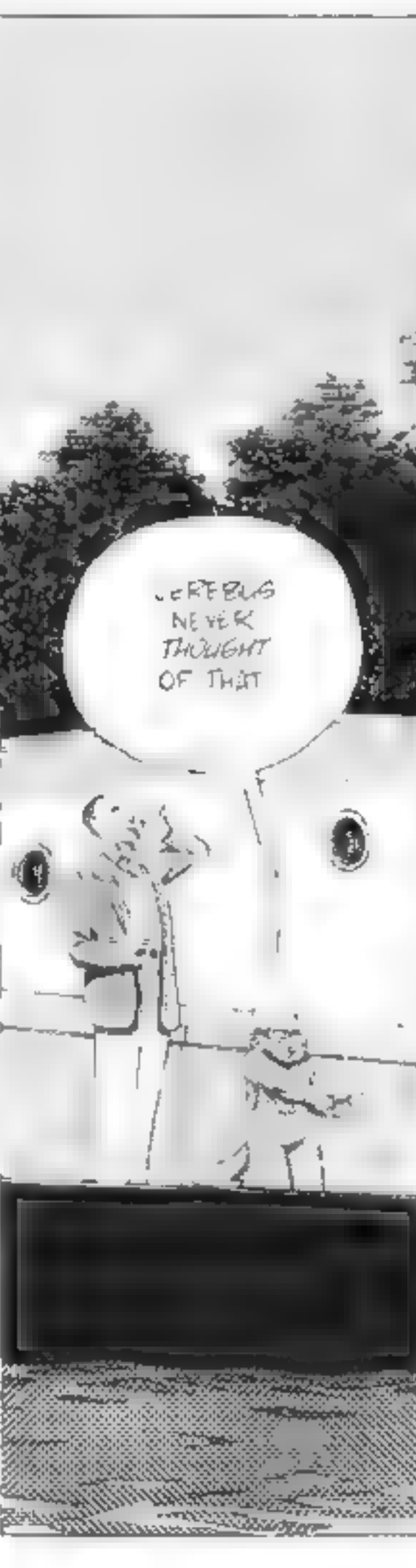
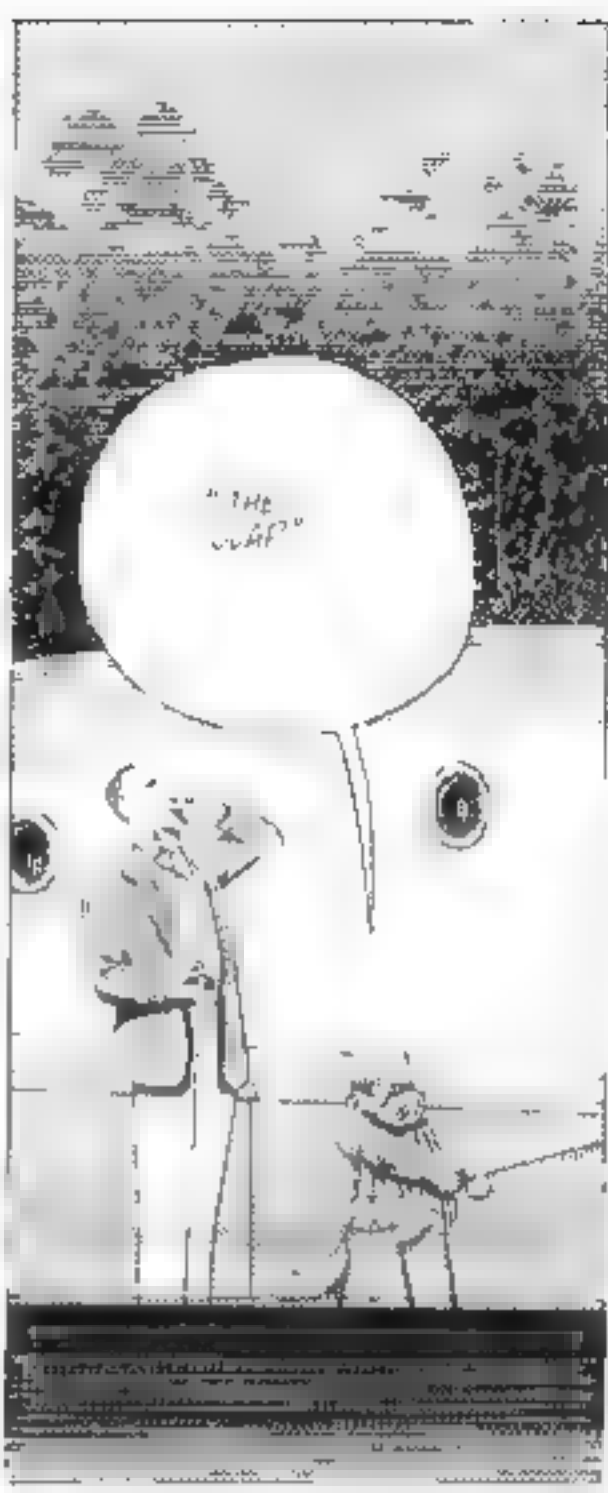


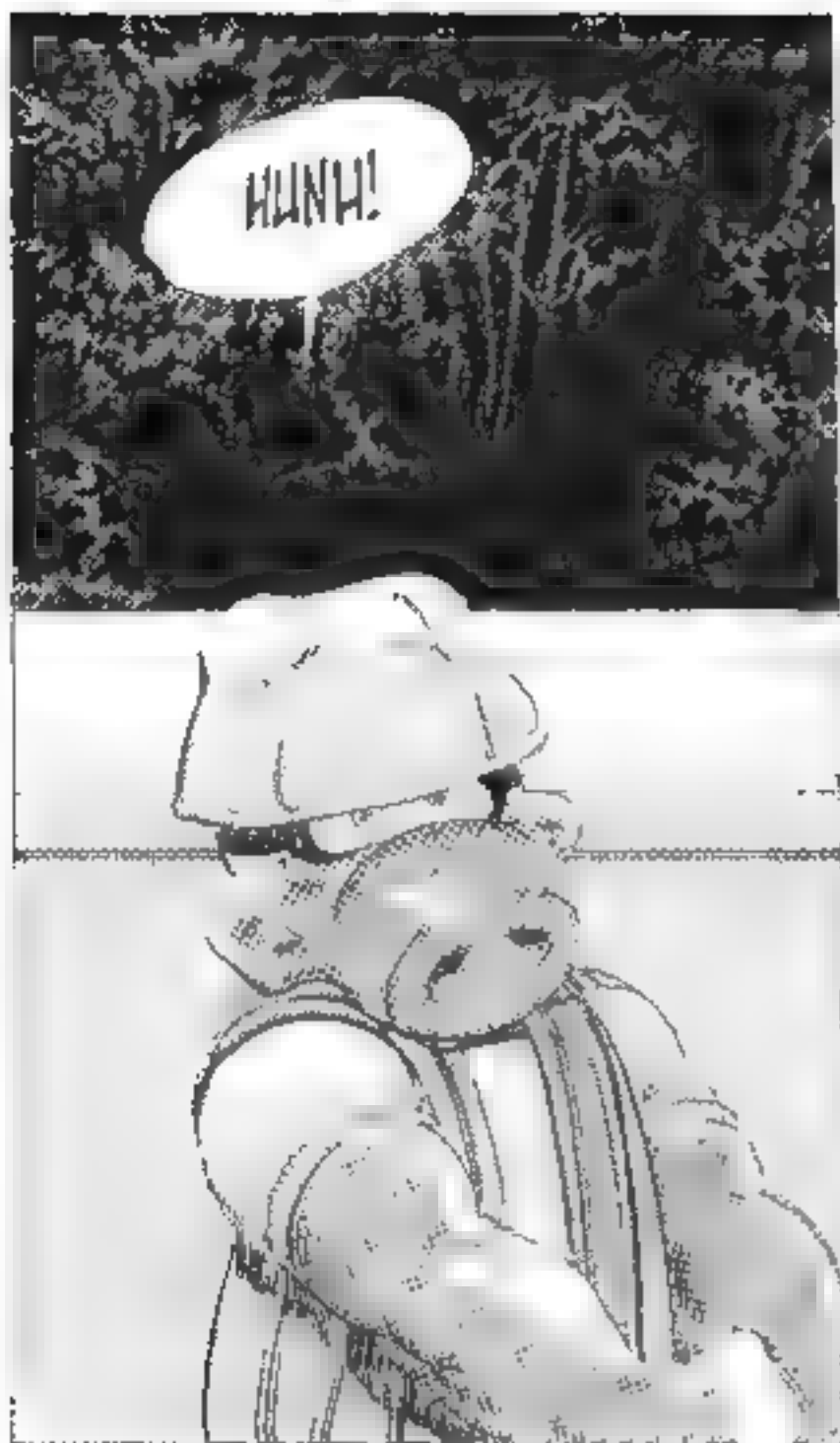






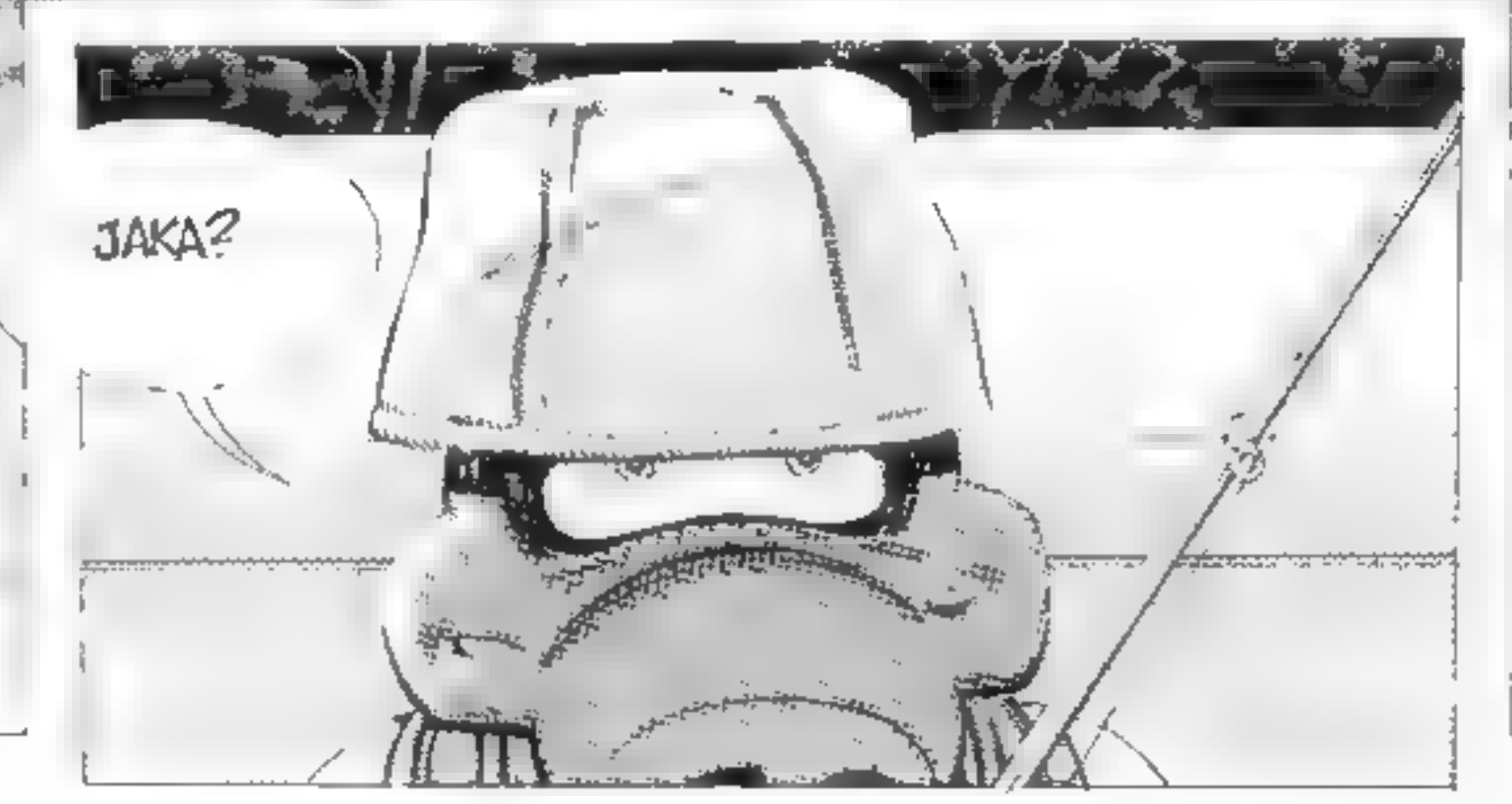
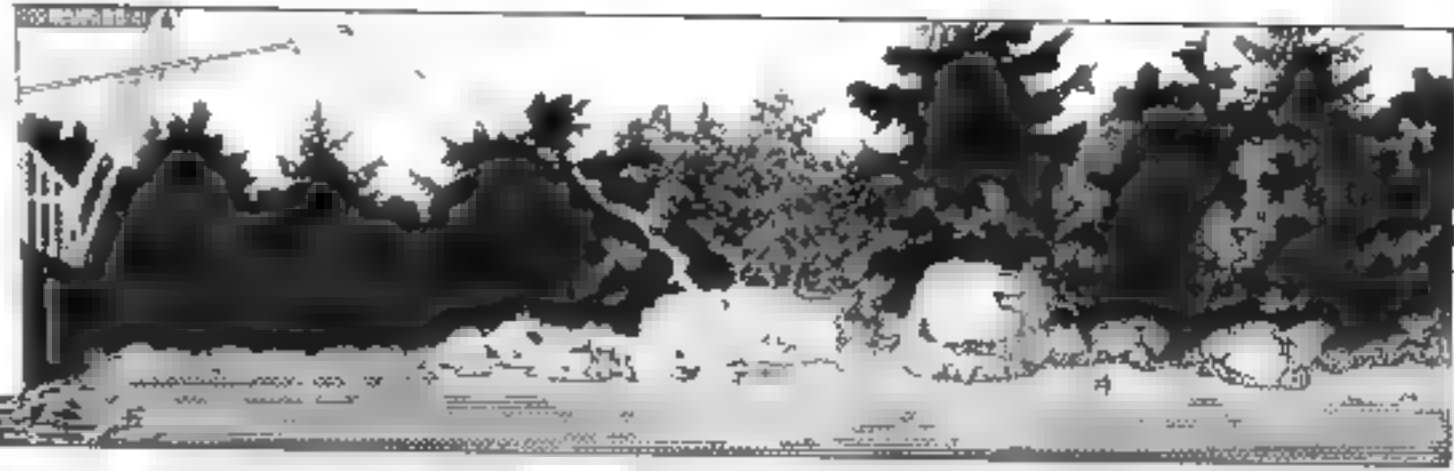
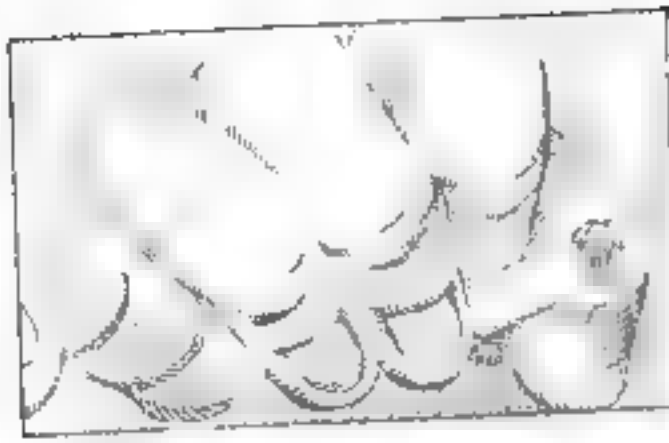


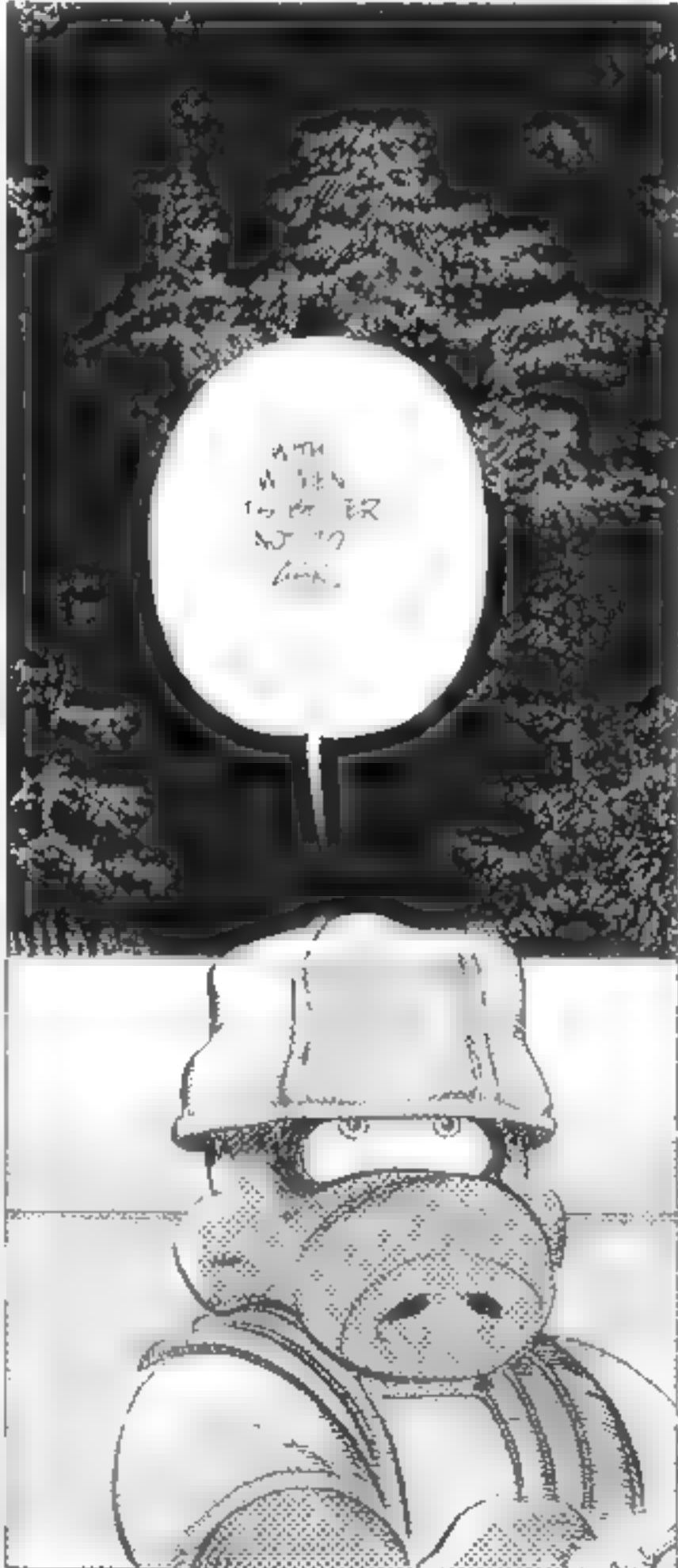
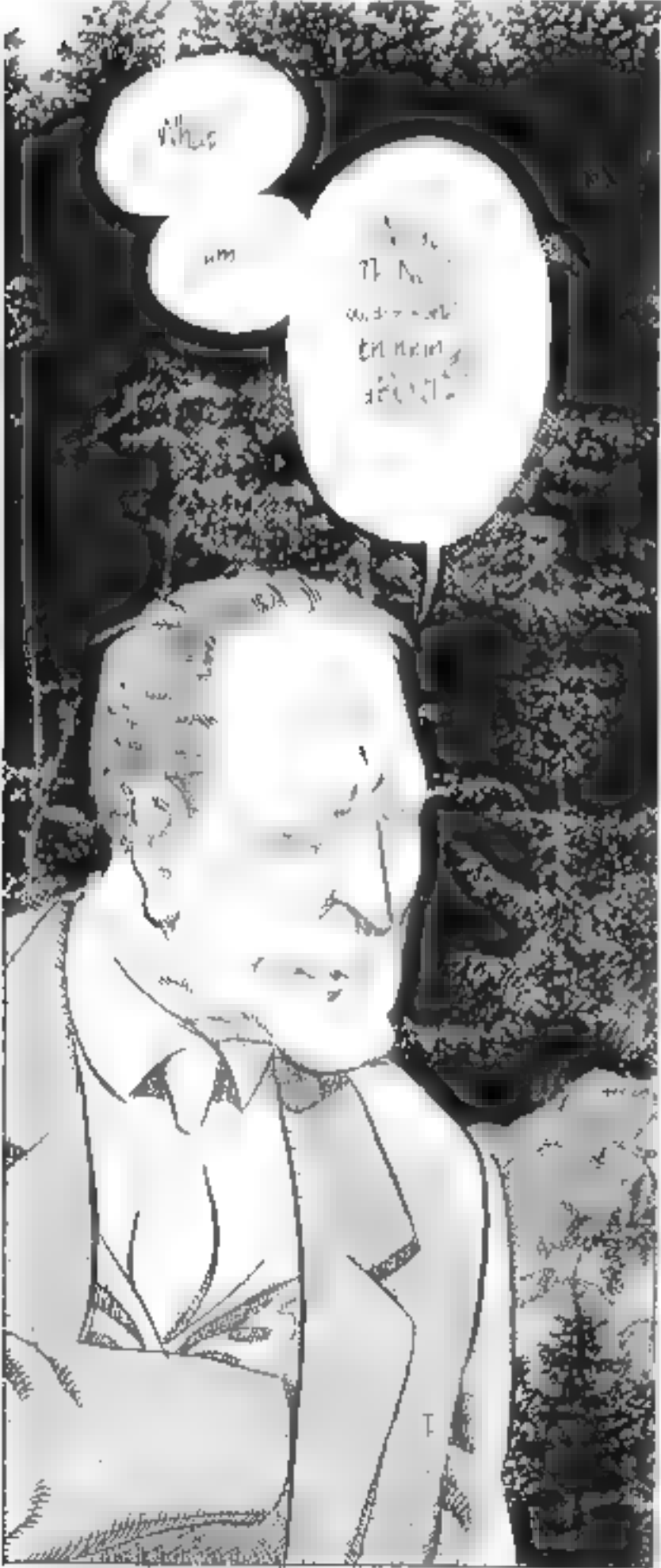
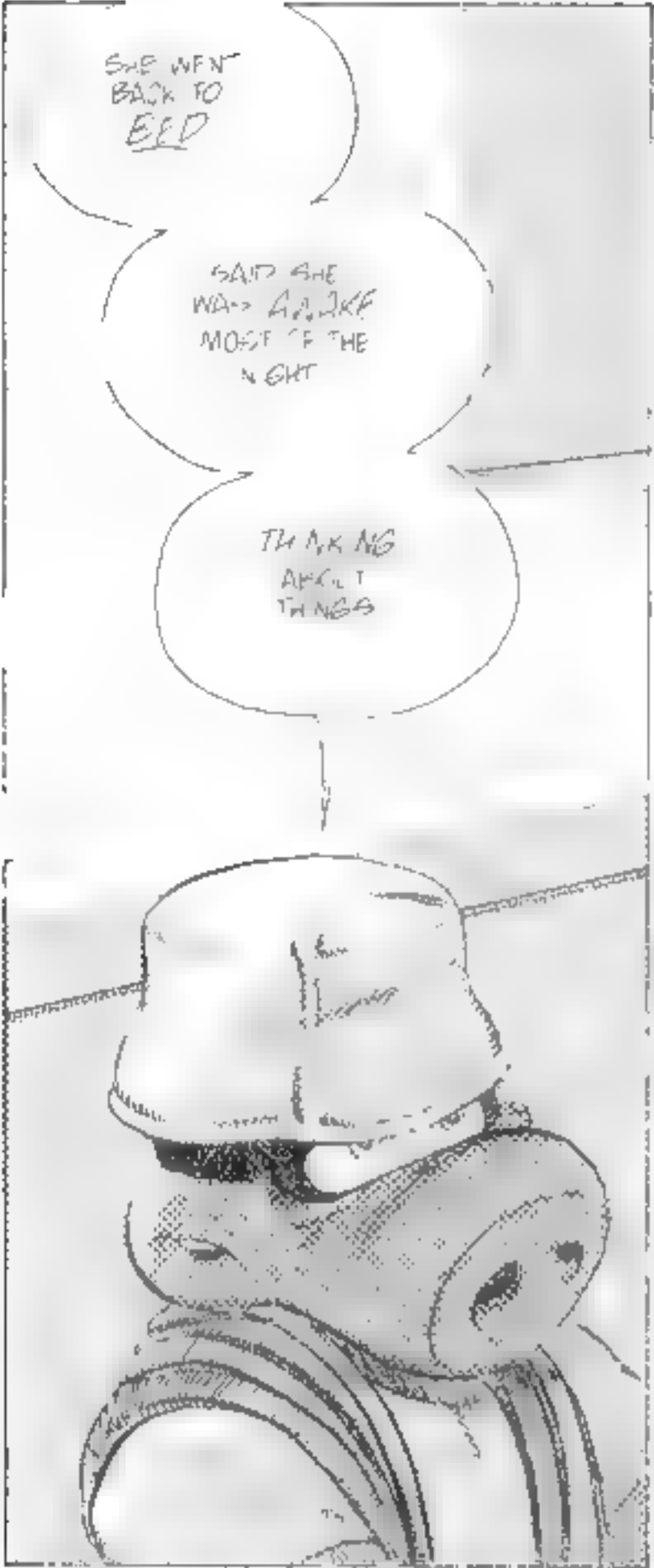




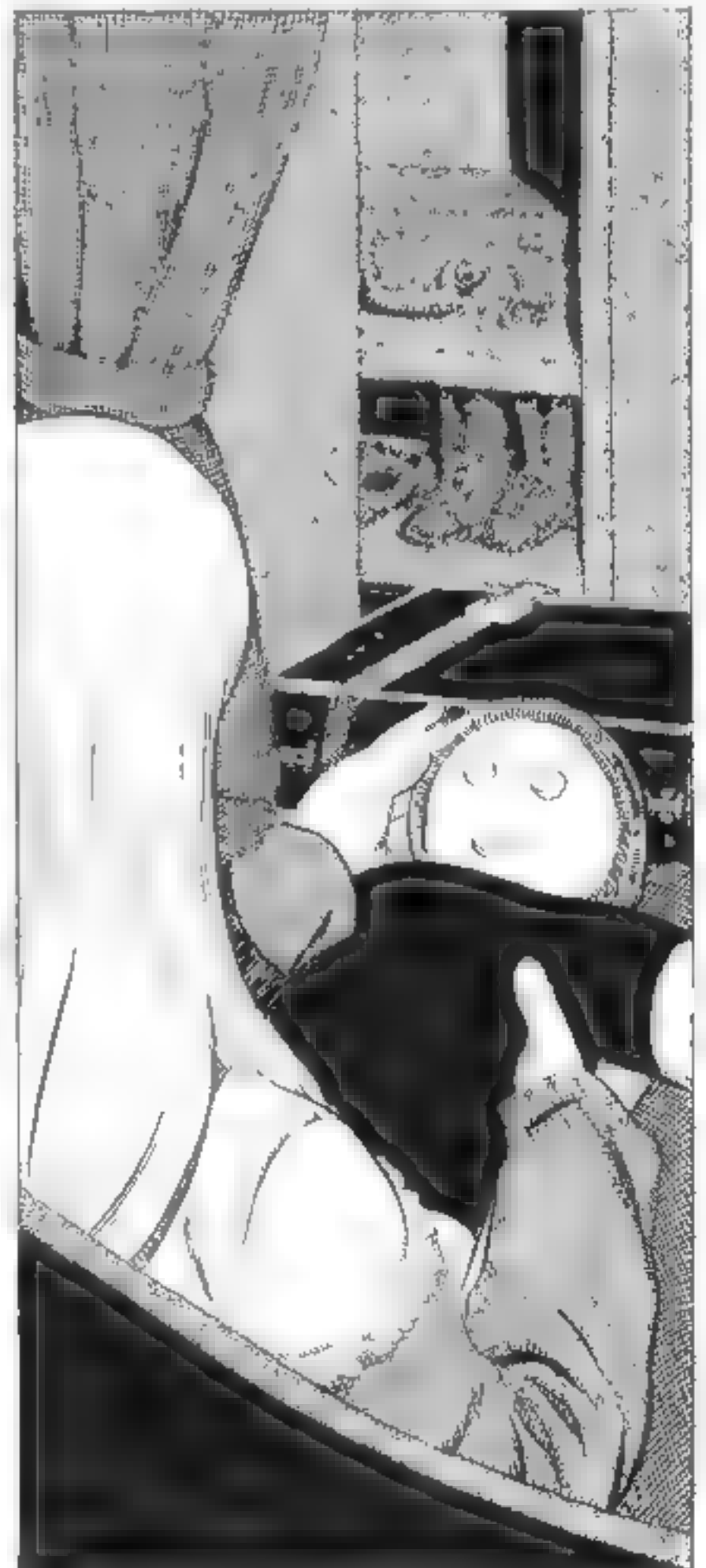
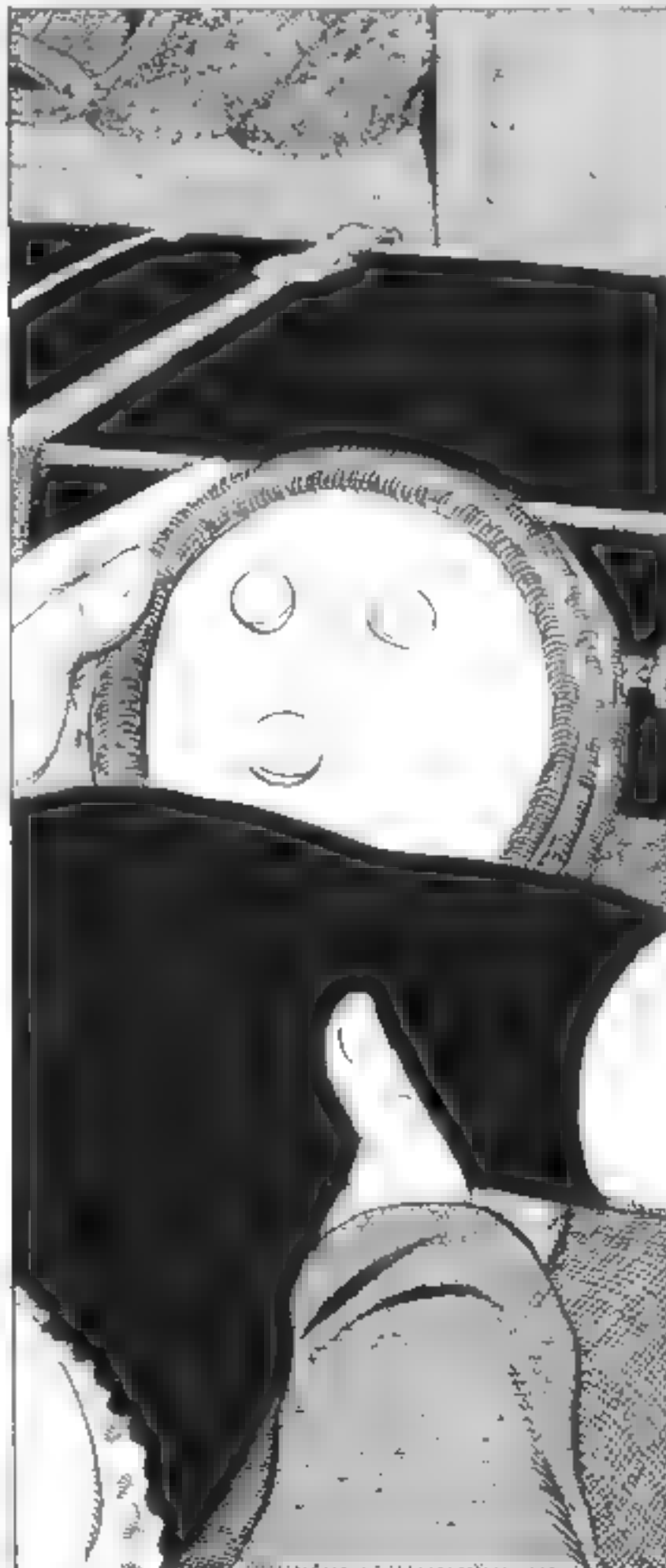
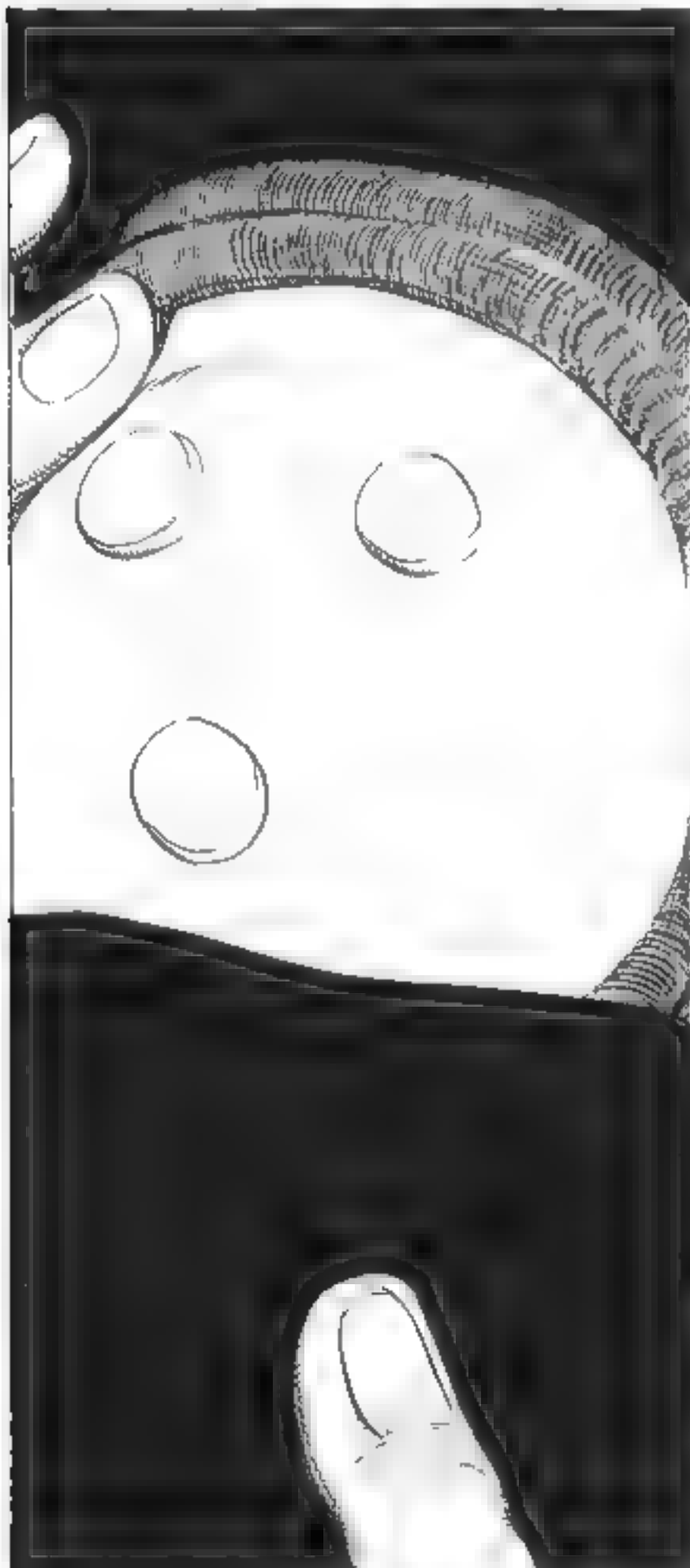
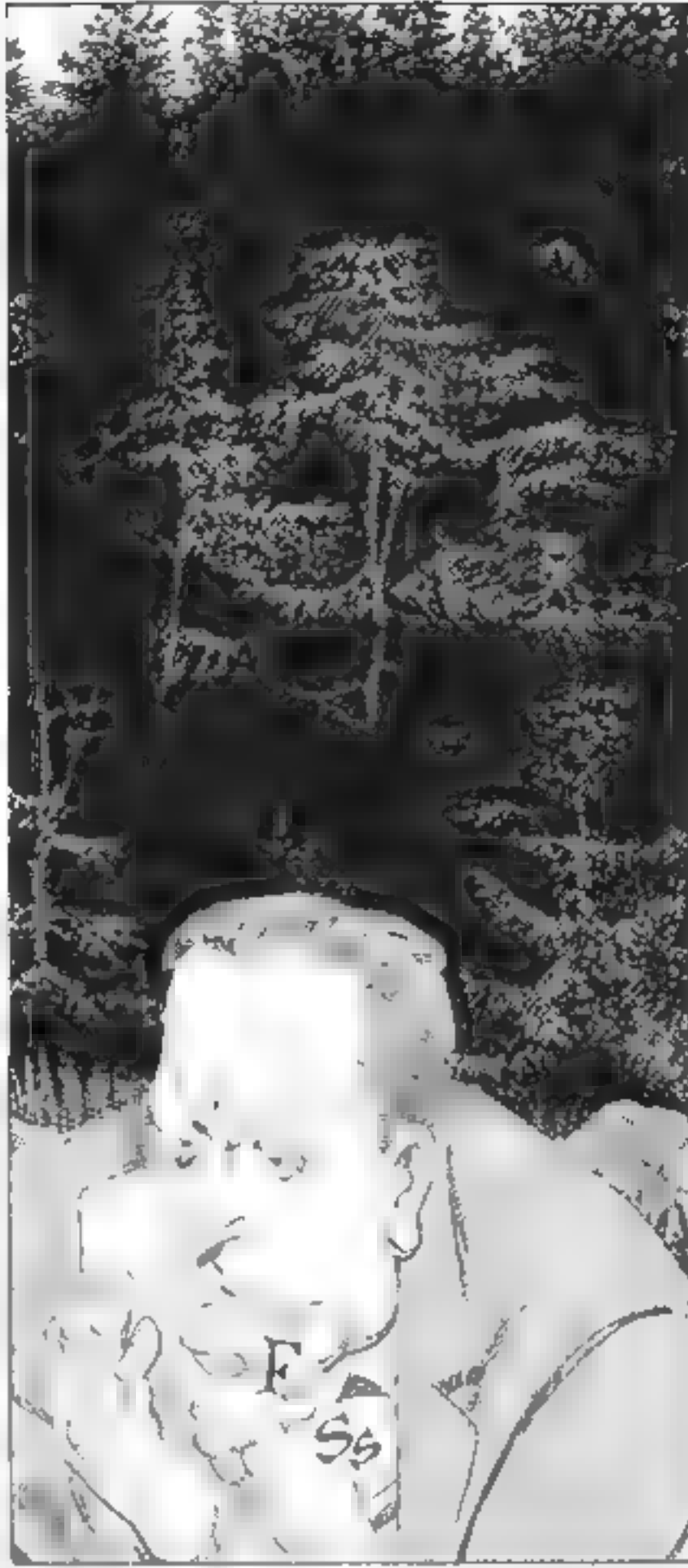


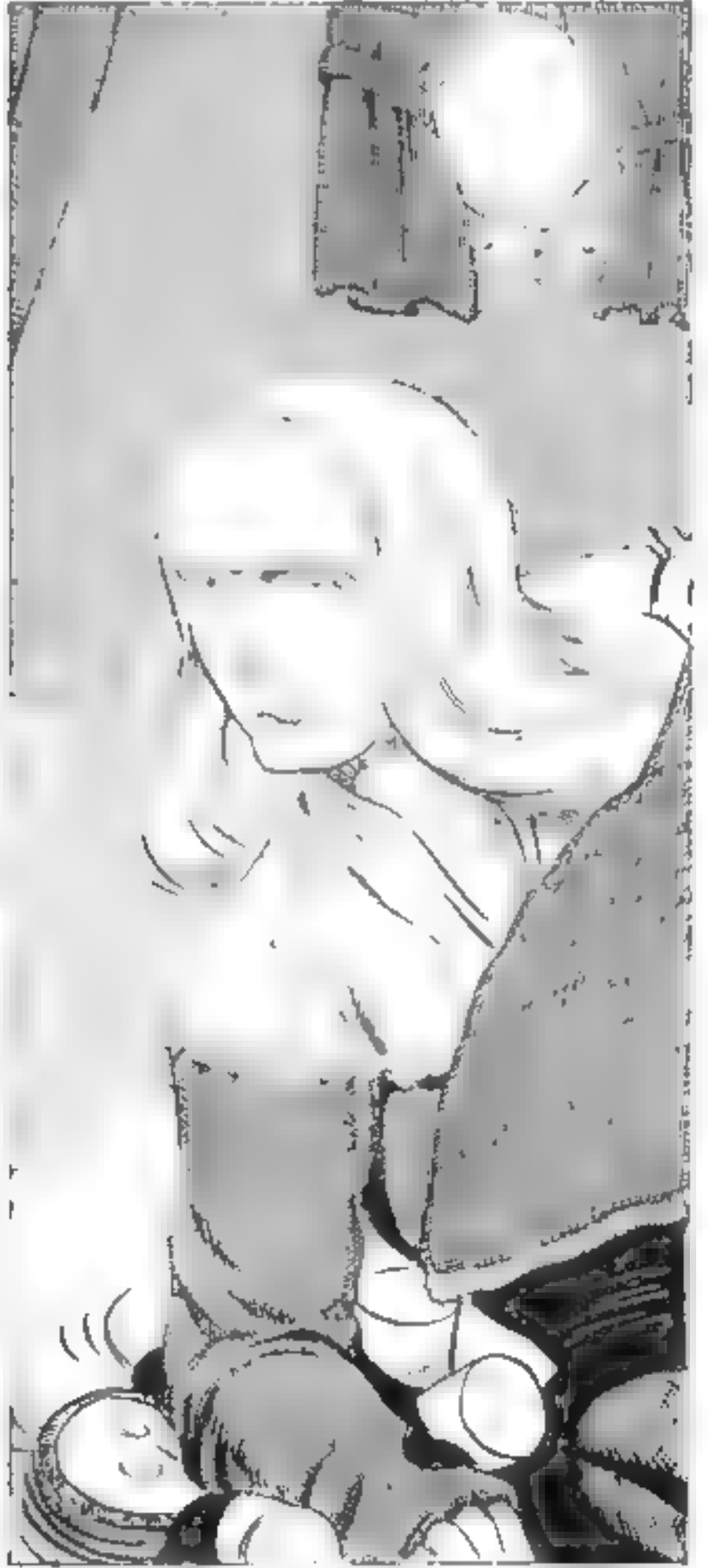
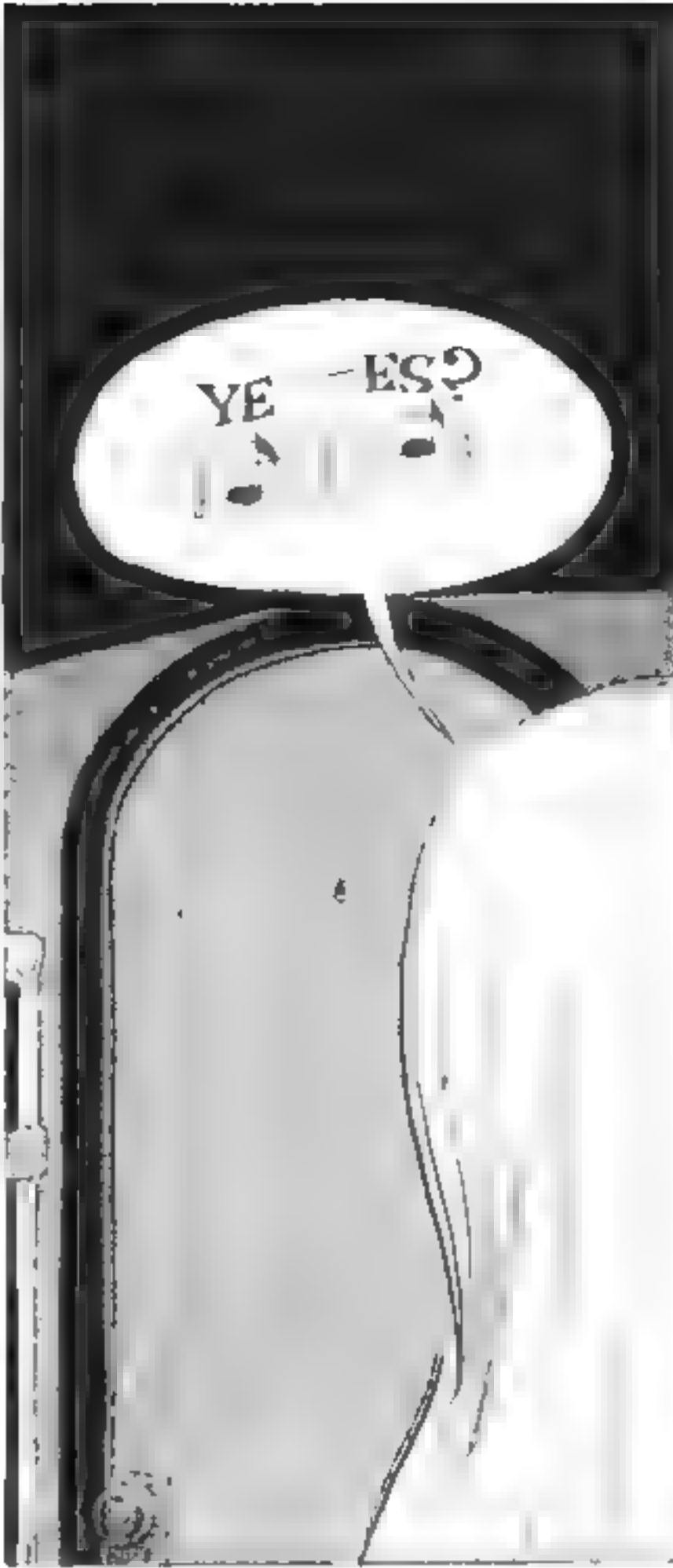
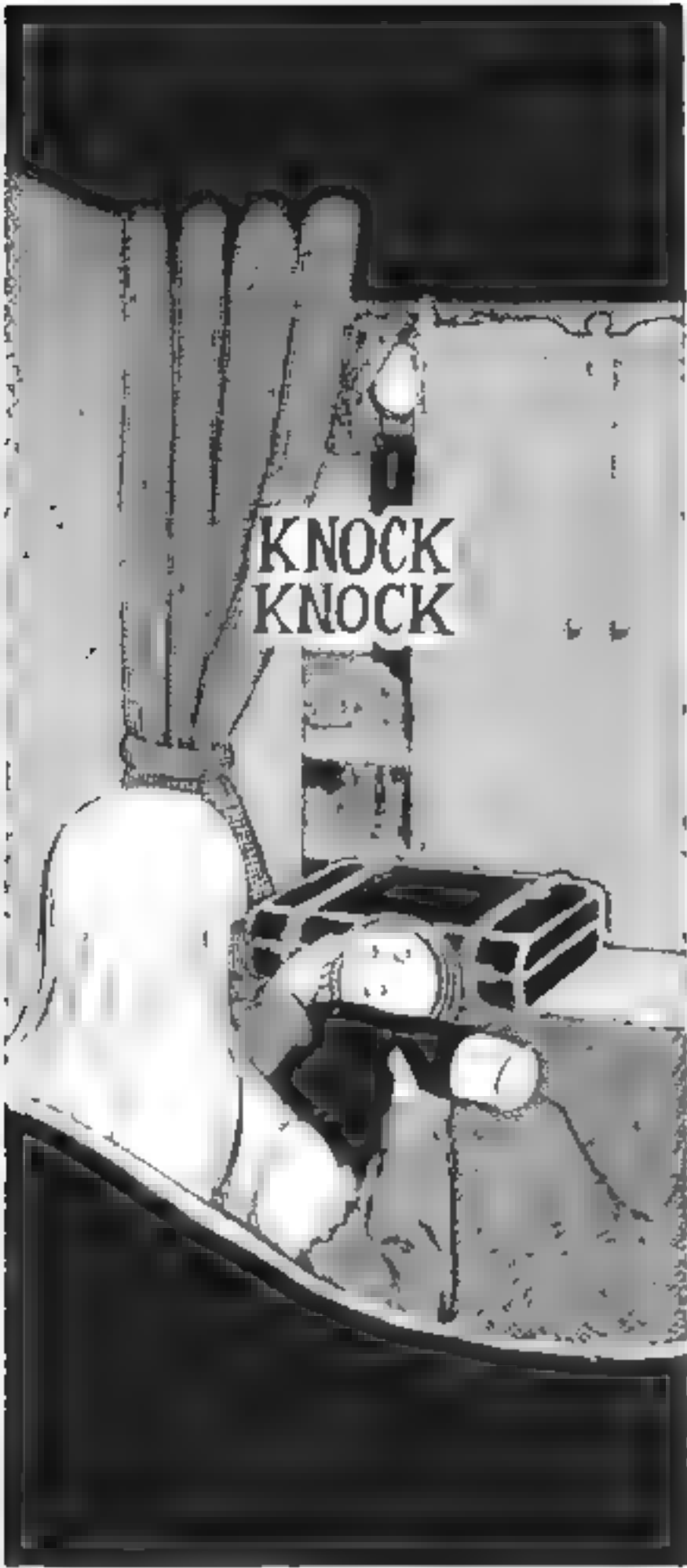


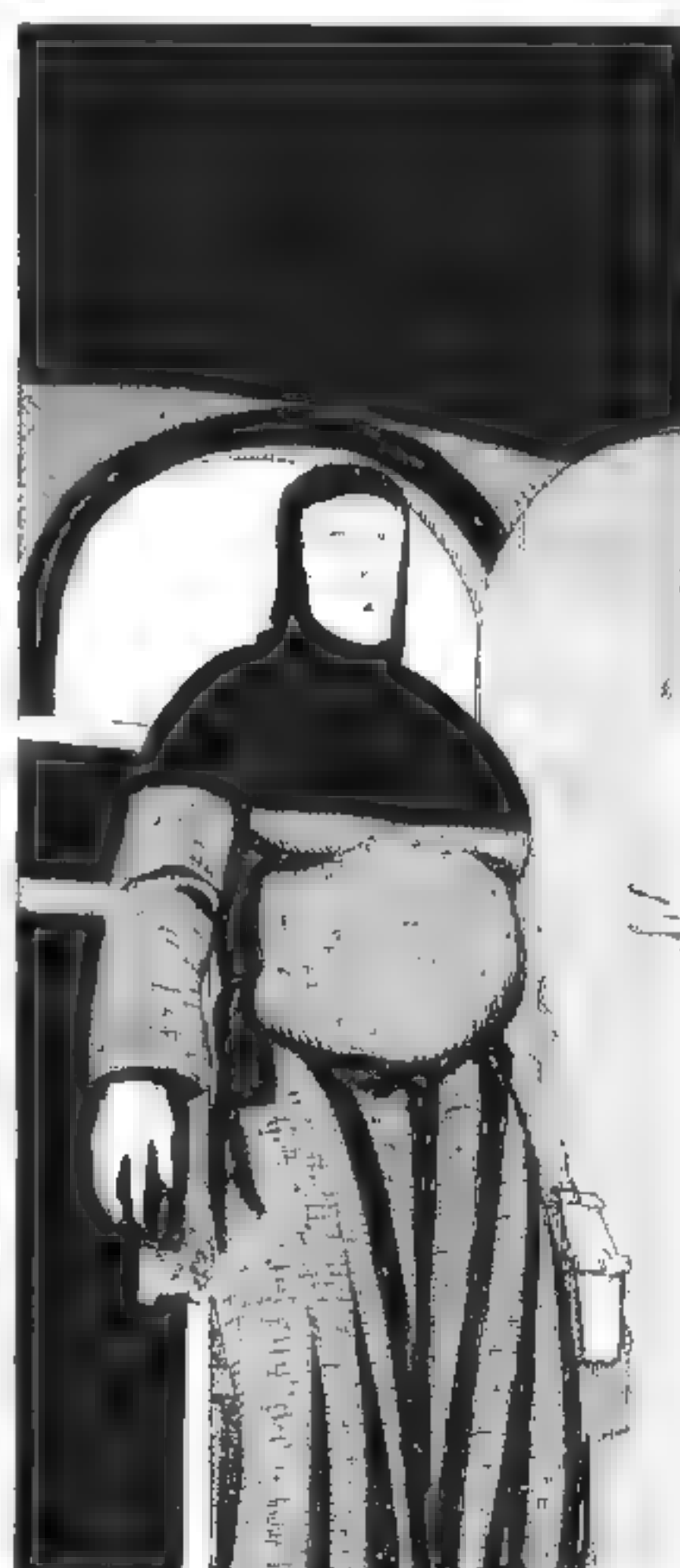
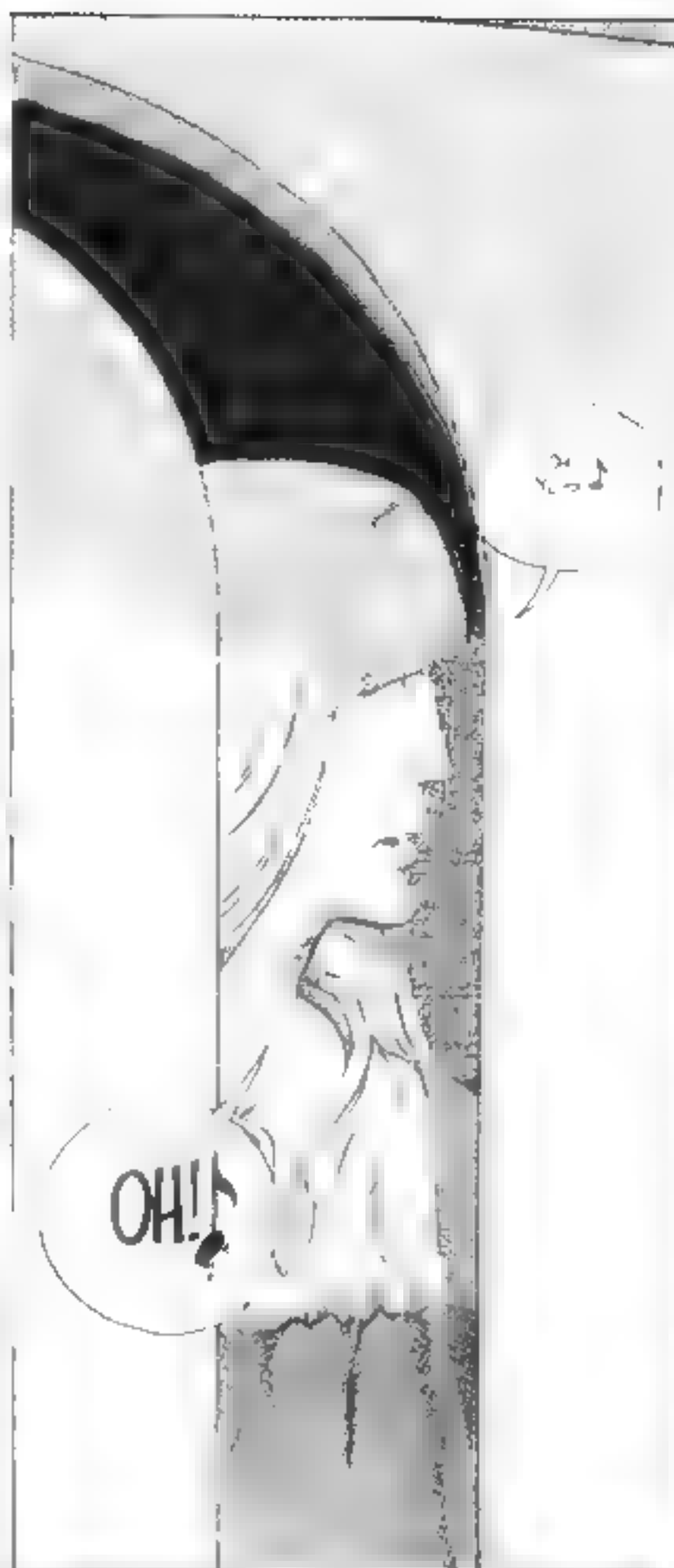




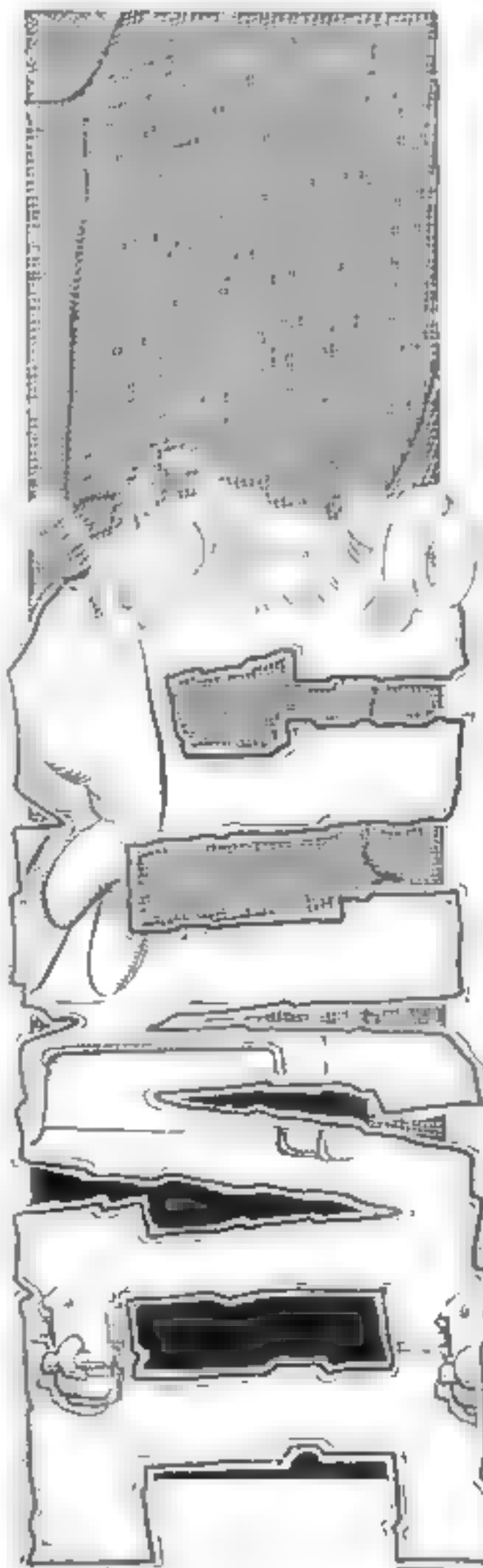










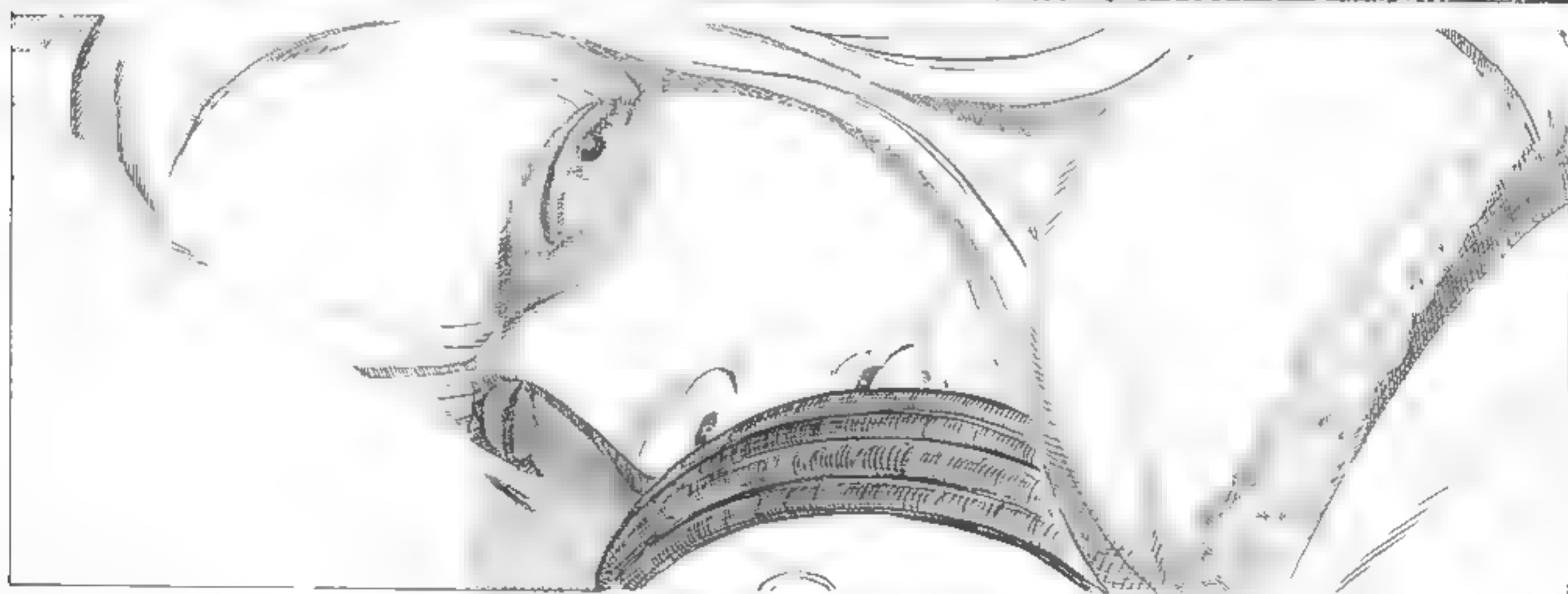












## PLEASURE'S SIMPLE LIFE

### CHAPTER III

#### THE BLOKE EN ROUTE

*It is noon of the next day. The doors and portholes of both staterooms have been opened wide to allow stifling inner atmospheres—vainly—to solicit relief from fresh, fragile gusts and thin breezes wafting up from the southeast. Though her outward demeanour allows of no evidence or sign that GINEVRA has reached a decision, JAY ANTHONY DIVER registers the unnatural heat of the autumn day as a portent that her thoughts—like his own—are now firmly fixed upon the Sea of the South...and her future island home there.*

*Before him, his notebook's current page sprawls with insular nouns, sentence fragments, and disjointed phrases, signpost impressions which document JAY ANTHONY DIVER'S day—a day which is growing, moment by moment, more dream-like and more unearthly. Attended by a half-dozen asterisks and underscored twice—vehemently!—on the page is: "Red ice to horizon" and "Pieces float up." He is unable to say which is the more peculiar: the scene before his mind's eye—waxing and then waning in clarity—of pink and crimson, fragments and splinters of ice (silently) floating up and away from the barge's forward impact...*

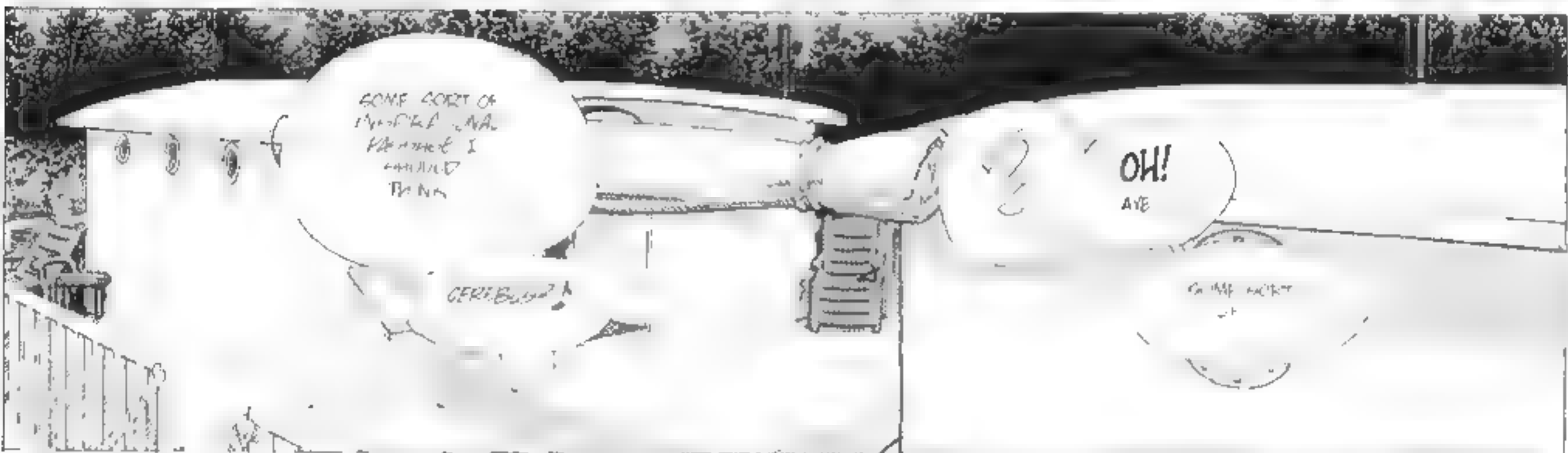
*...or the fractured apparitions themselves, which seem to him both disconcertingly unnatural and— at one and the same time — reassuringly familiar.*

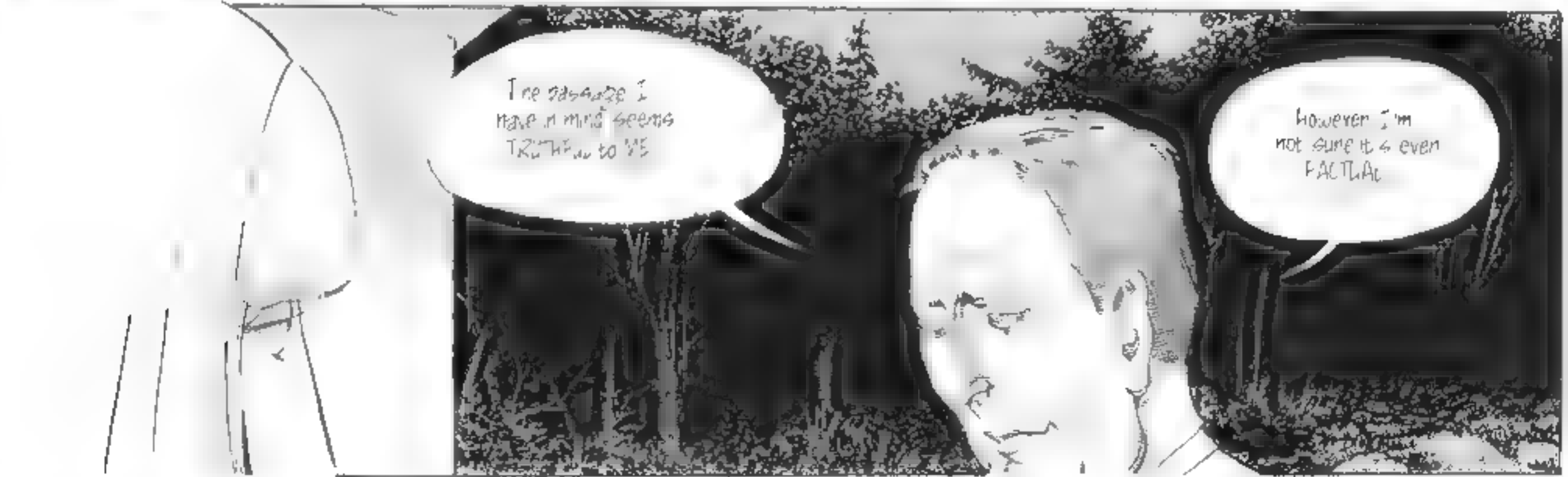
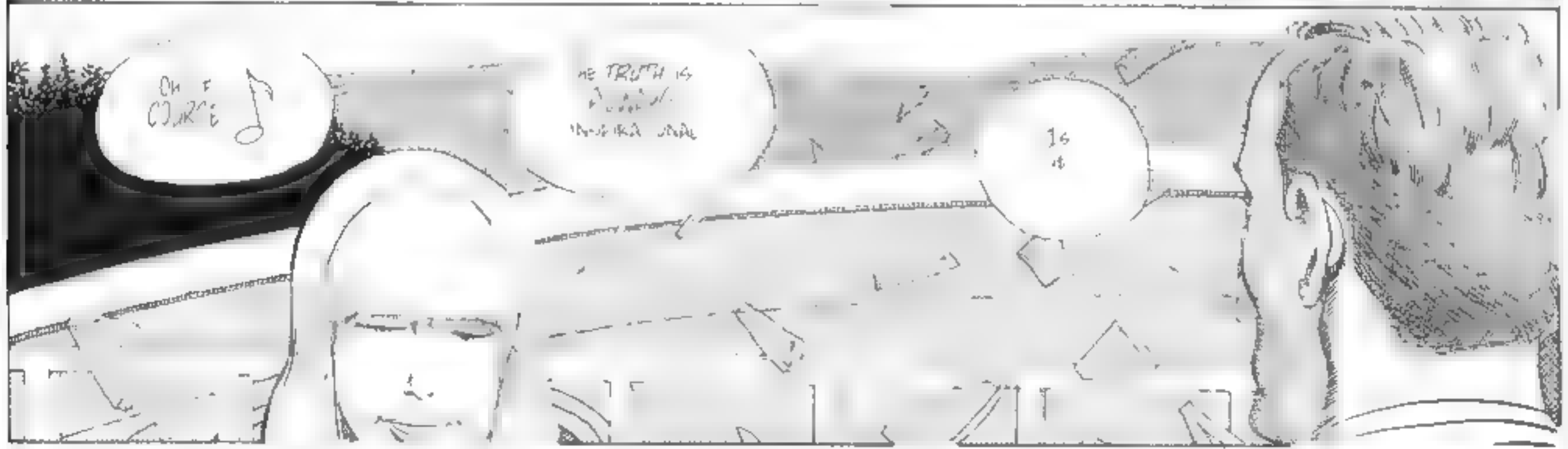
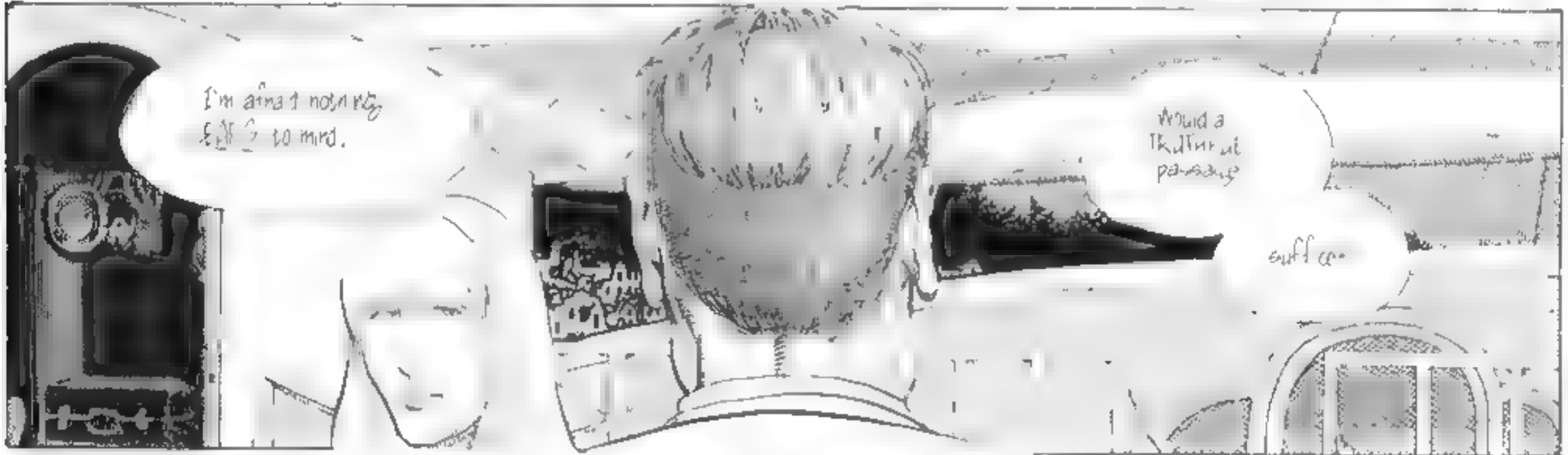
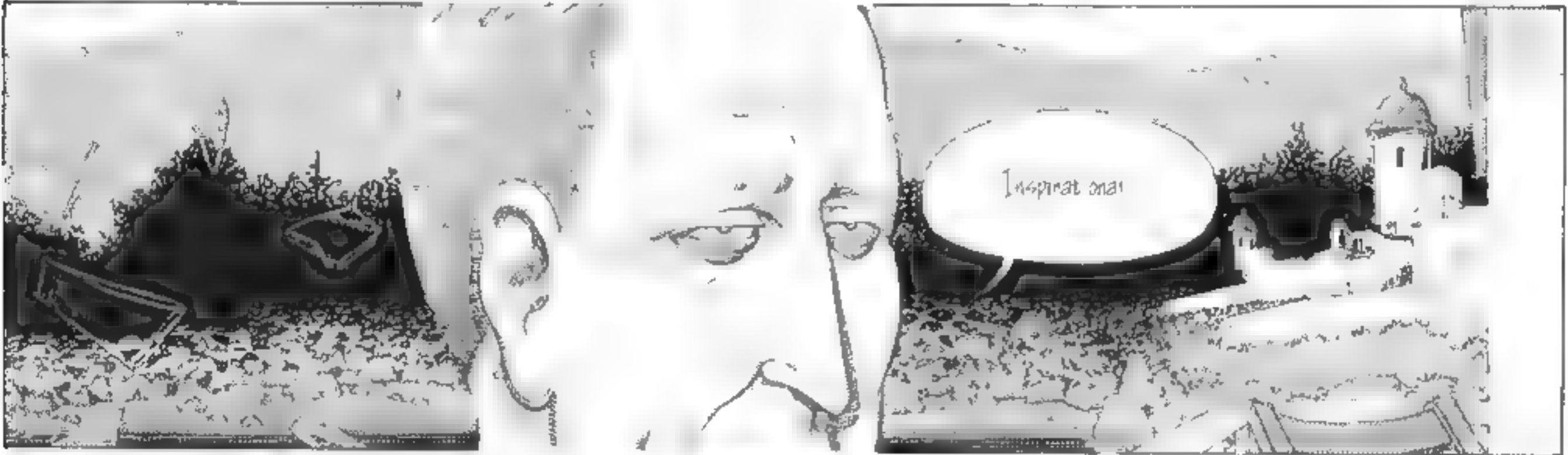


*The Mothers are nowhere to be seen so that—unprecedentedly—the table is still strewn with the used glassware, plates, cutlery, and napkins of the noon meal. In his exceptional state of mind, it seems to JAY ANTHONY DIVER that all of these—the tabletop debris, the jumble of words on the page before him, even GINEVRA and JOZAN themselves (neither of whom have moved for some period of time)—share in a state of existence quite separate from his own. The only discernible movements on the rearmost deck are those of his pencil and his hand as he writes: “Dishes, words, GINEVRA, JOZAN. Chaotic, random, but fixed configuration.” As if in reply, a carmine-coloured ice splinter pinwheels, lazily, through the inner radius of JAY ANTHONY DIVER’S peripheral vision, so that he feels—almost—as if he might reach out and catch it.*

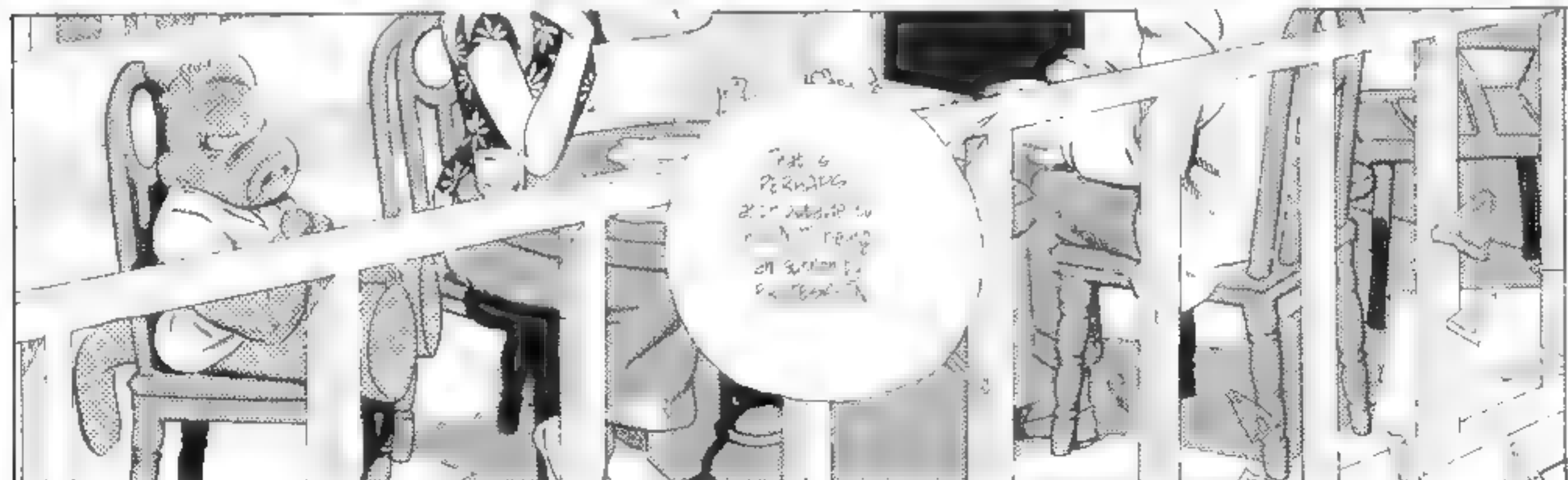
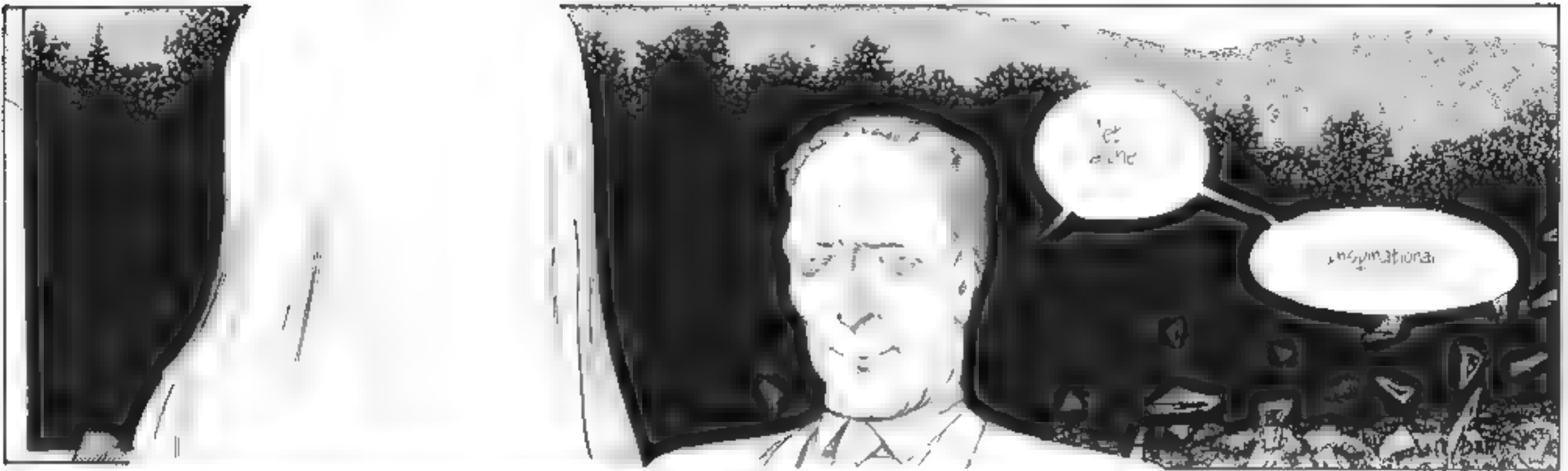
*He senses rather than sees GINEVRA stirring uneasily in her chair, her eyes, like JOZAN’S, still fixed upon the crumbling yellow walls of some antiquitous Lower Feldan town passing—as if in review—before them. Somehow, JAY ANTHONY DIVER is possessed of the knowledge that—despite her inward resolve to not interrupt his writing—in a moment she will do just that. “Yes, Miss Tavers?” Somehow, JAY ANTHONY DIVER is possessed of the knowledge that her interruption will take the form of a request. “Not at all, Miss Tavers. What is it you would like to hear?” Somehow, JAY ANTHONY DIVER is possessed of the knowledge, even as he begins, mentally, to refine the structure... “Inspirational”...and the word-rhythms... “Inspirational”...of the third chapter of the second book of his as-yet-unnamed novel...*

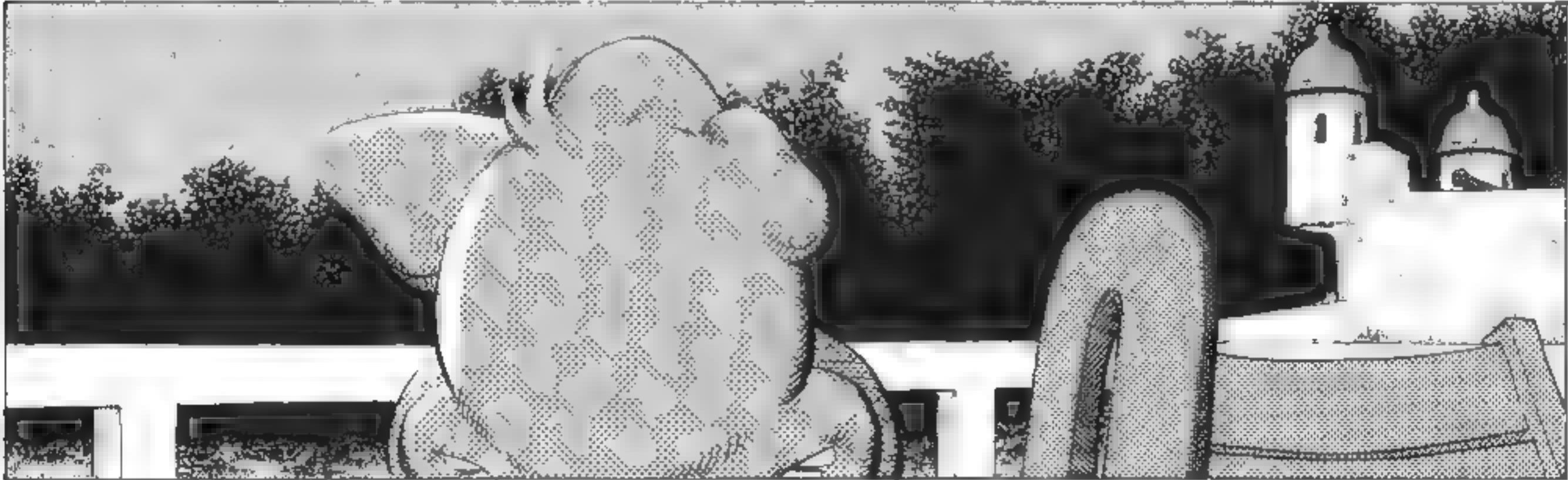
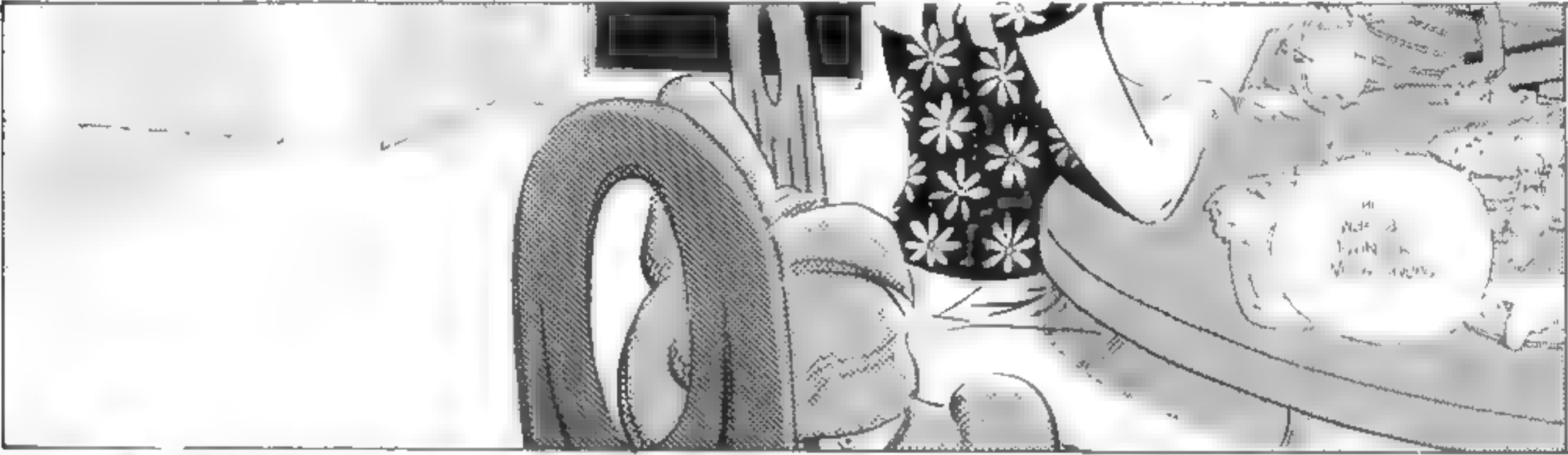
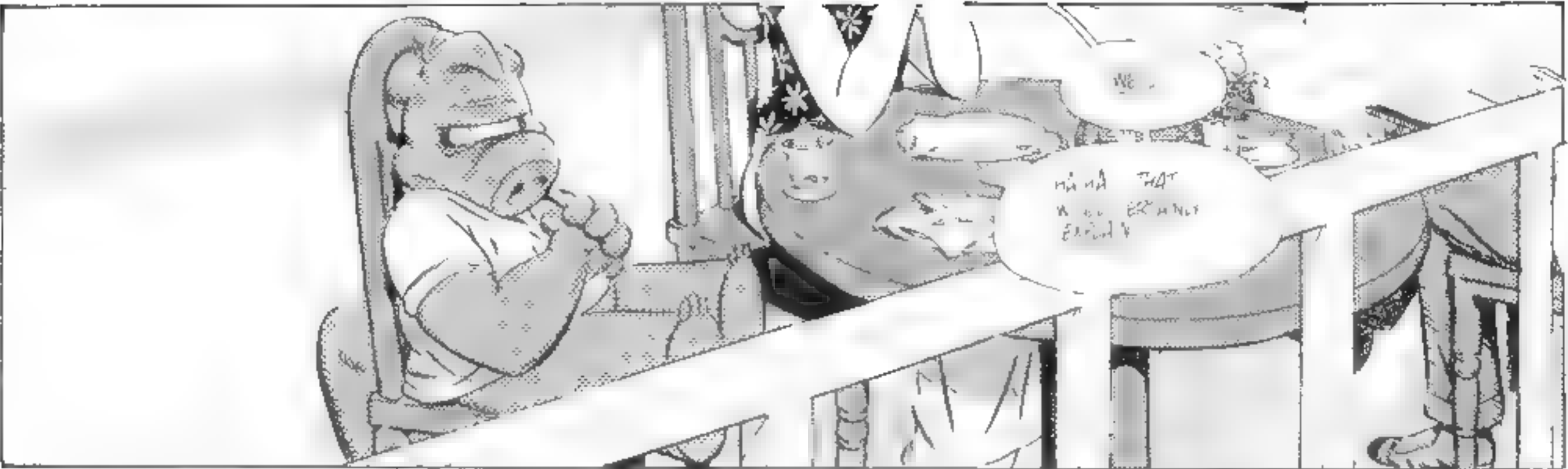
*Somehow, JAY ANTHONY DIVER is possessed of the knowledge that the content of the chapter is...in a very real sense... predetermined.*



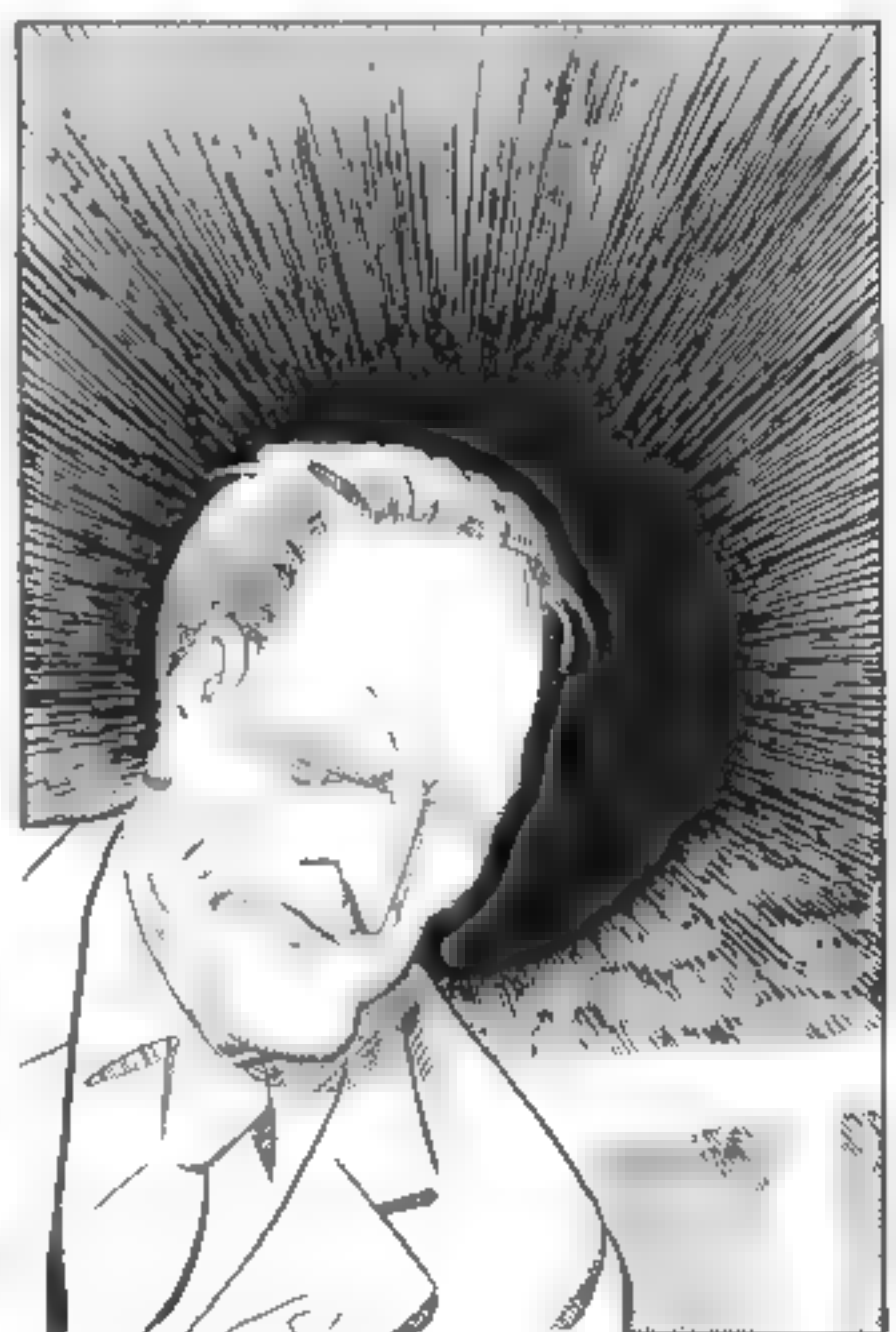
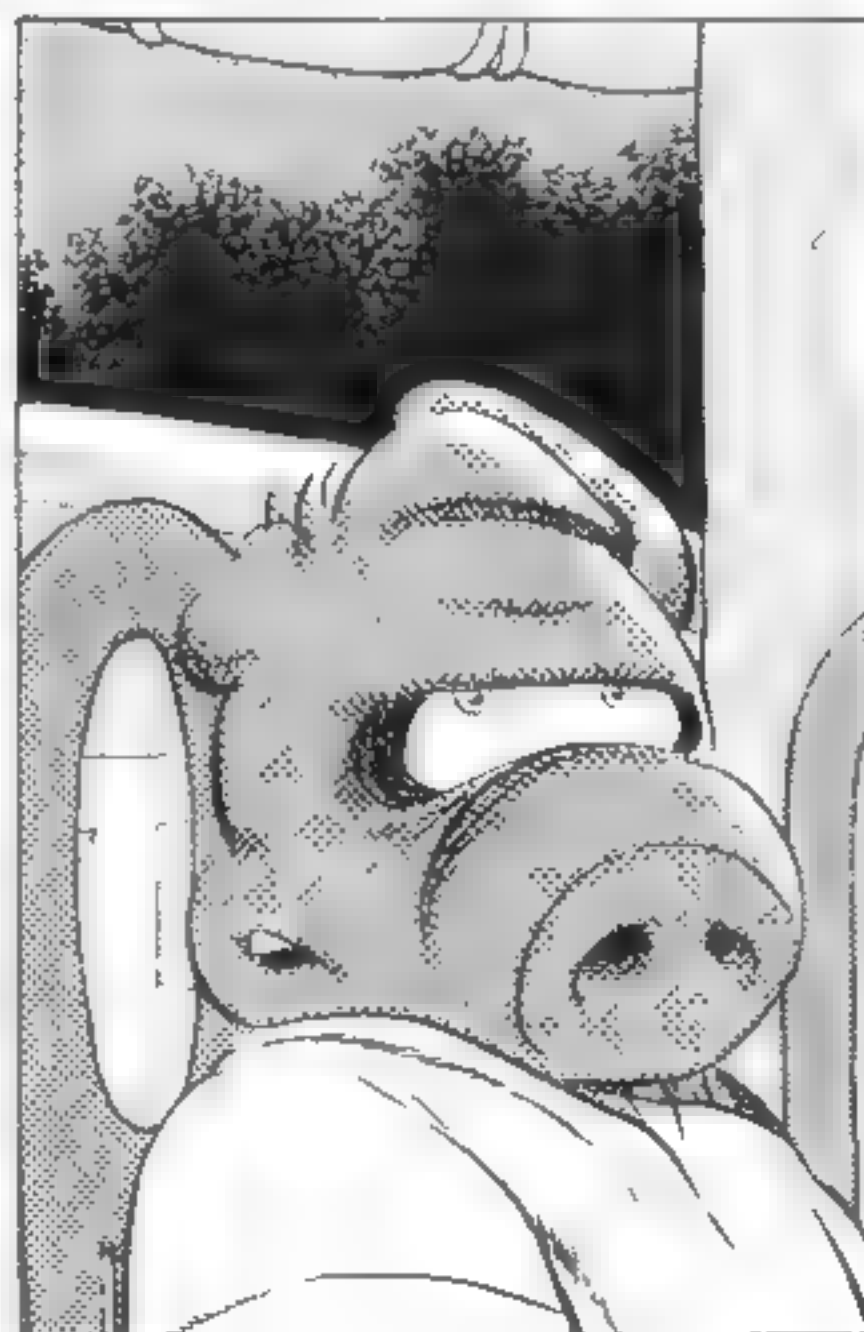
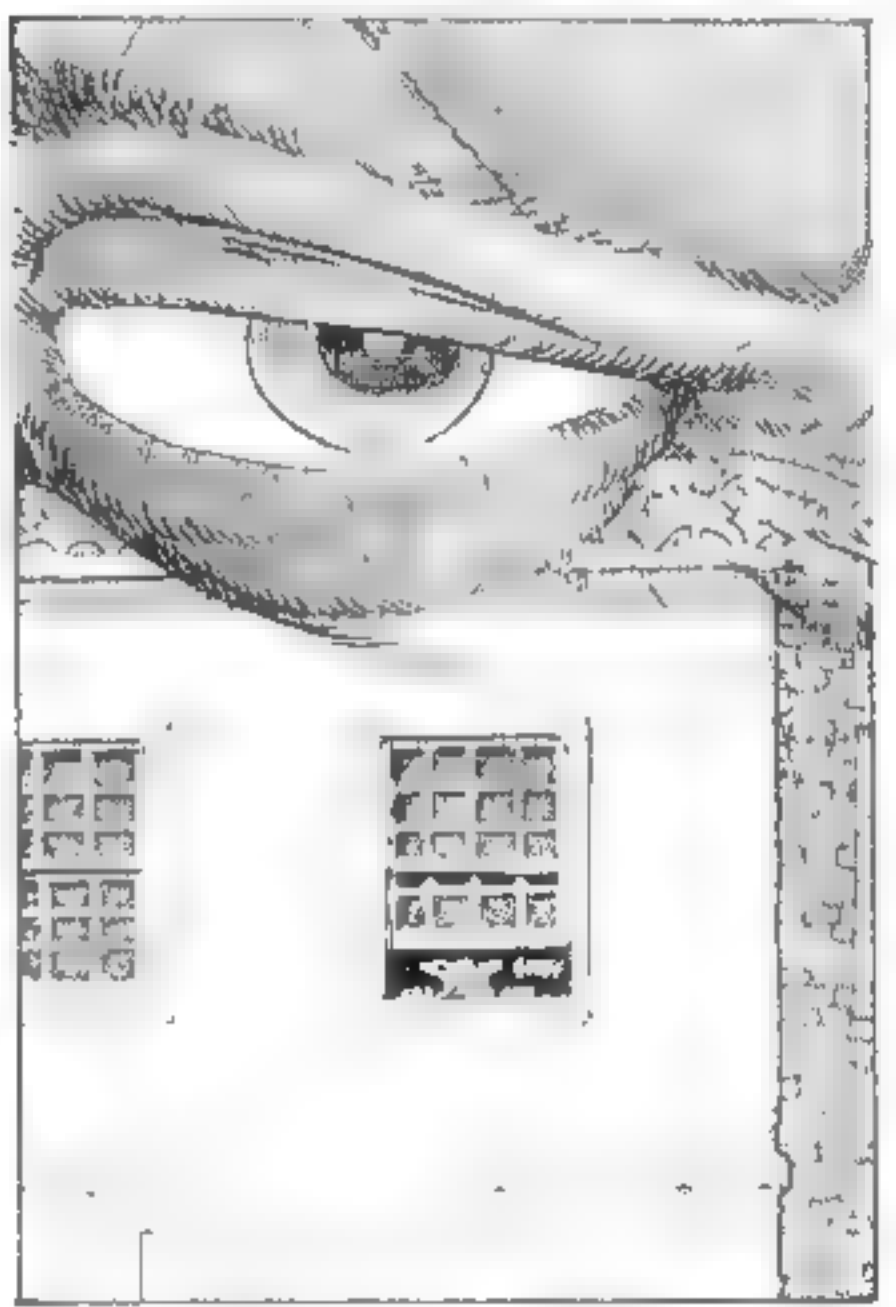
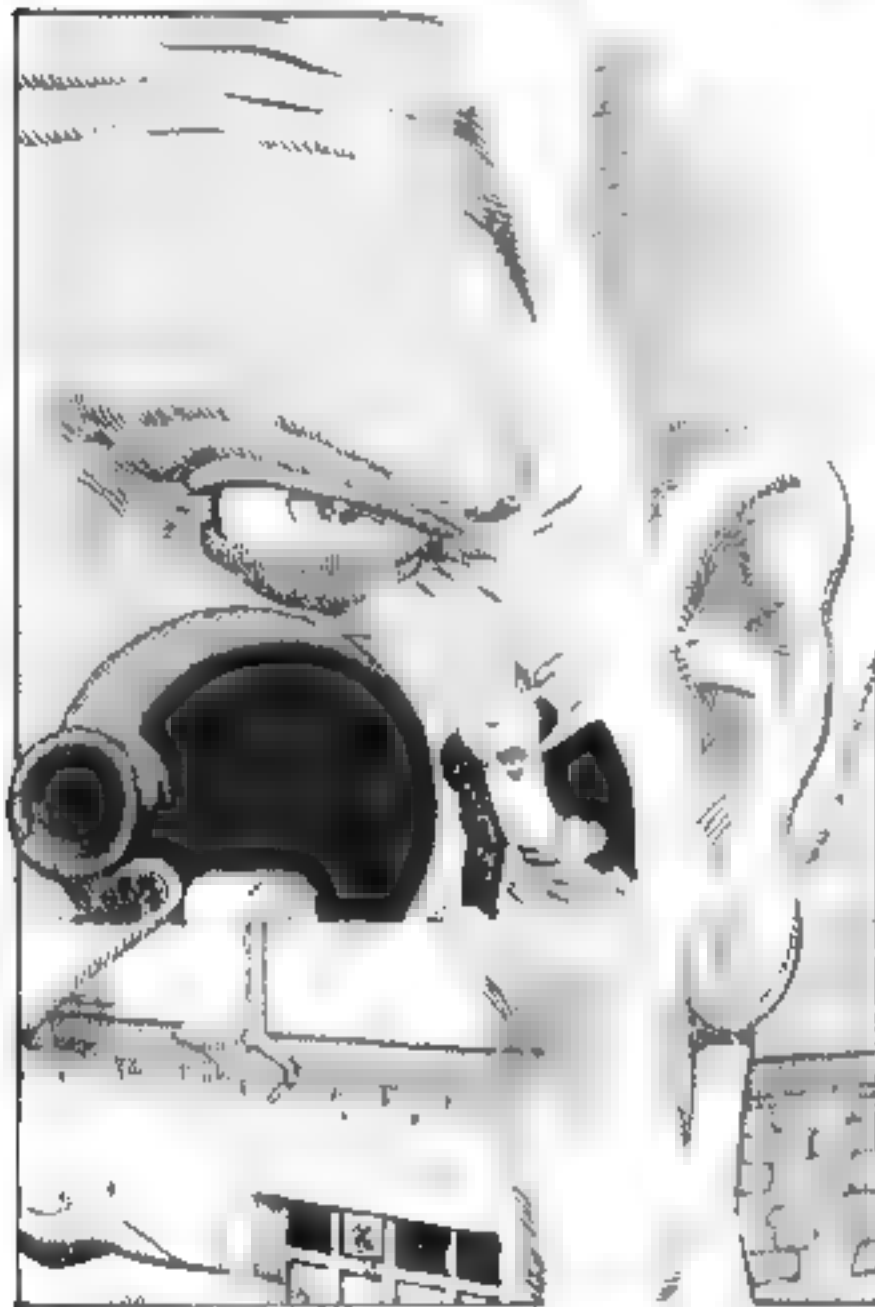




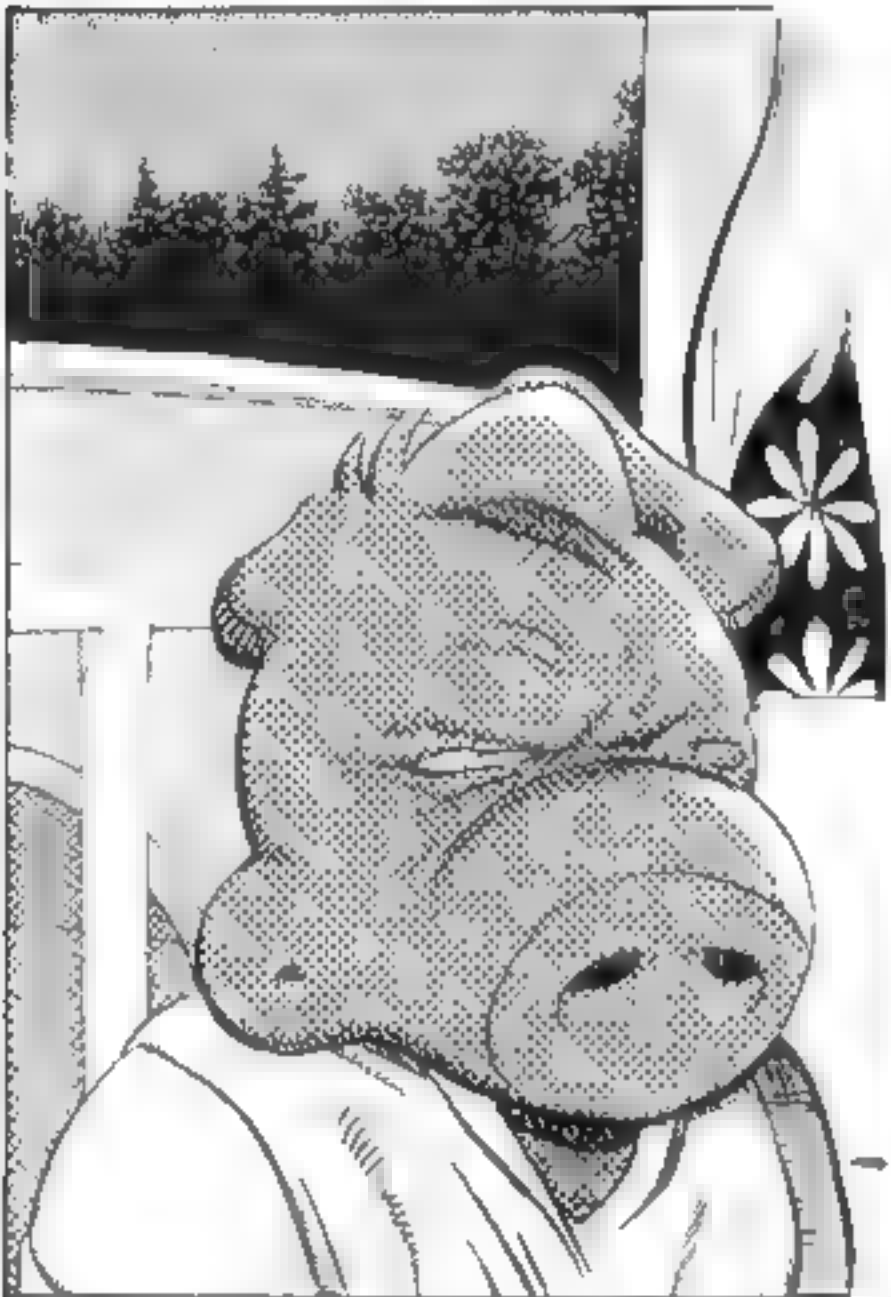
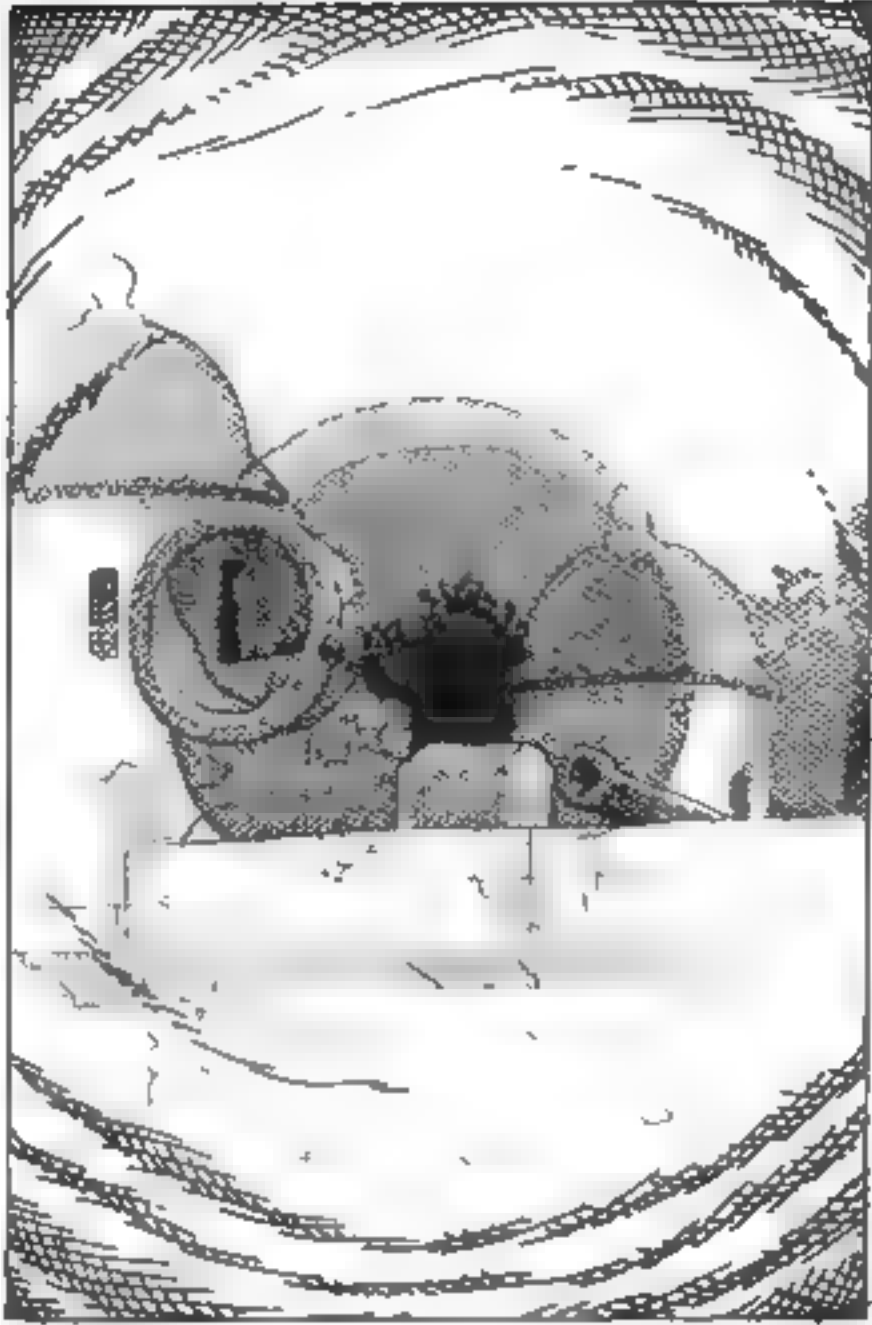


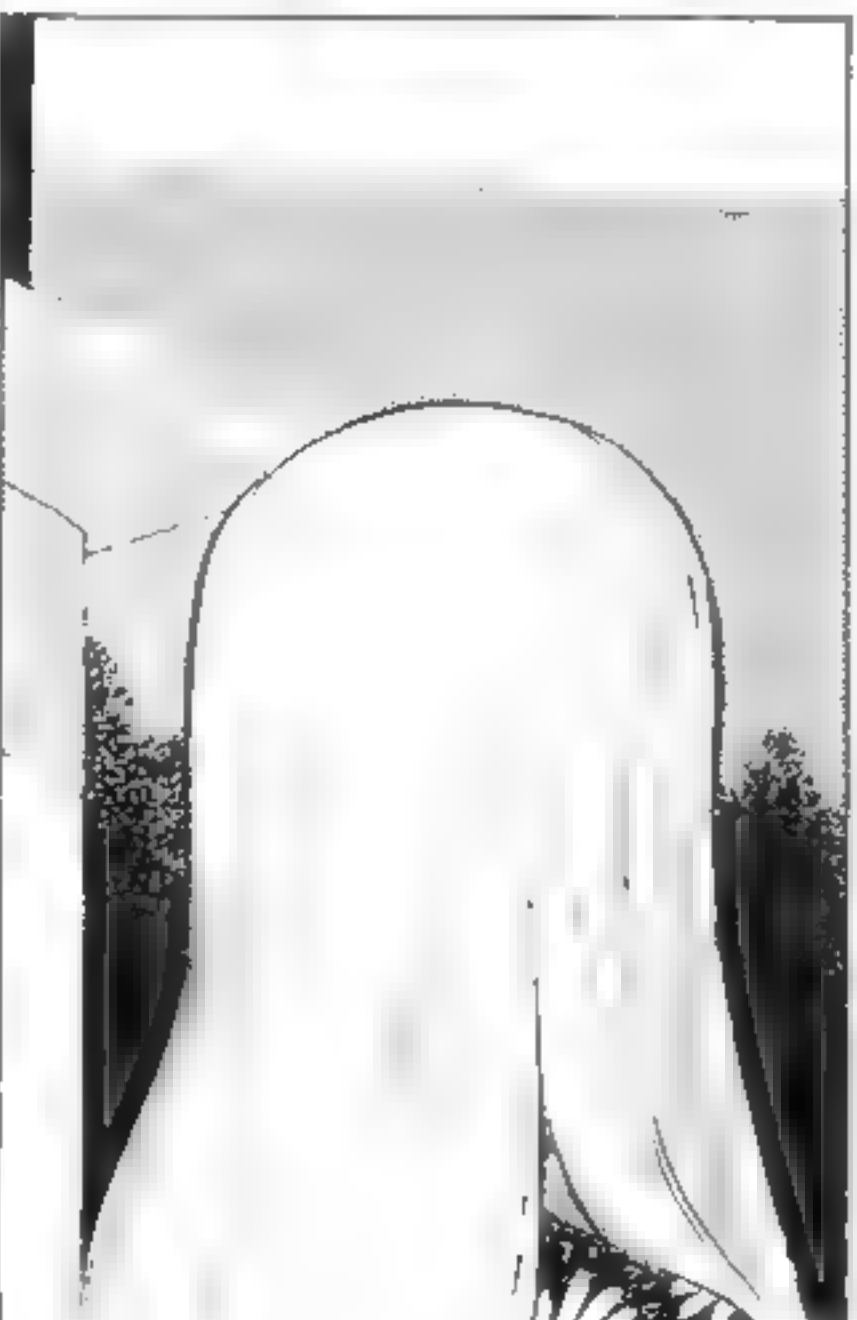
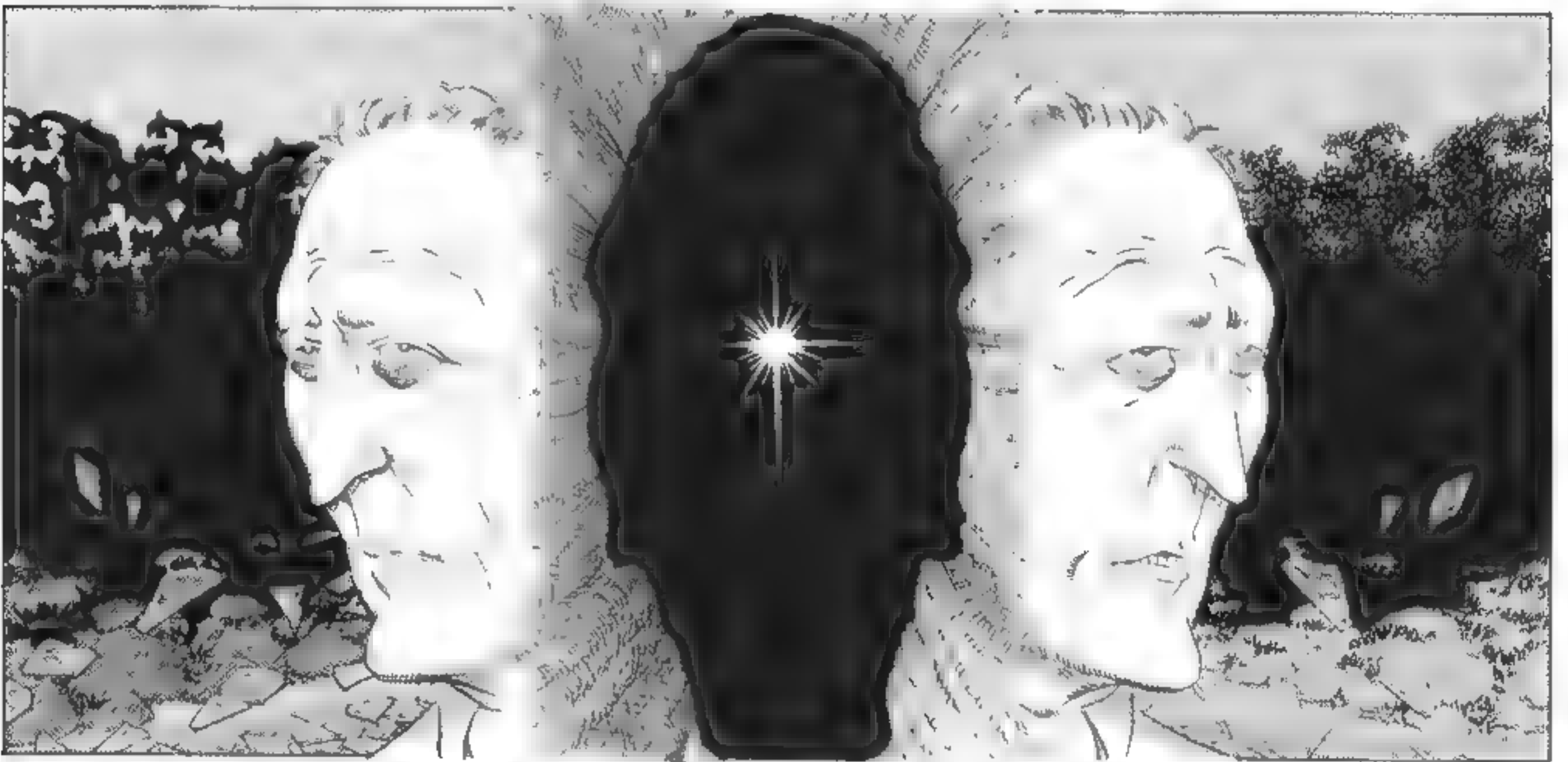












JOZAN: (*characteristically oblivious to the conversational crescendo which is imminent*) Ginevra, look. See that turret over there?

(*With that half-heartedly agreeable—and wholly feigned—interest which is the stock in trade of any dutiful spouse, GINEVRA does as she is bidden. Simultaneous with the shift in her attentions, the “Red ice to horizon” fades from view before the mind’s eye of JAY ANTHONY DIVER and is supplanted by a mountainside courtyard encircled by small buildings. Atop one of these—alongside three large, black, metal spheres—stands the figure of a man, red-faced and apoplectic with rage. The man—whom JAY ANTHONY DIVER recognizes as himself—shouts hysterically at someone in the building opposite his own, someone who is:*)

JOZAN: Jozan killed a guy over there once.

(*No sooner is this said than an excruciating, hammer-blow pain strikes JAY ANTHONY DIVER below his left breast, wrenching his torso forward. Paralyzed and in agony, he is unable to draw a single breath, is unable to attract GINEVRA or JOZAN’S attention by either word or sound, and—his mouth working silently, convulsively—is thus unable, for their benefit, to voice the obvious distinction between the large metal spheres on the rooftop and the flared metal cylinder peeking over a battlement which blurs before him. Blackness swirls in from the periphery of his vision, until, as if from a great distance, he hears:*)

GINEVRA: No.

(*So off-handedly and yet so definitively is this said that it seems to escape JOZAN’S notice—entirely—that GINEVRA had not been with him on the occasion in*



*question. Likewise does it escape JAY ANTHONY DIVER'S notice—until he later transcribes his notes on this strange interlude—that he, DIVER, had not been there either and so has no way of knowing about GINEVRA'S OWN absence. Somehow, however, know it he does.*

*After what seems like an eternity of torment, he hears JOZAN'S grudging reply:)*

JOZAN: Nay. Nay, you're right.

*(And with that, the crippling pains and crushing vise-like pressures in JAY ANTHONY DIVER'S chest vanish as quickly as they had appeared. Astonished, he...gratefully...refills his lungs with sweet, fresh air. GINEVRA turns back towards him—blithely ignorant of the ordeal he has just endured—and arches a single eyebrow, as if to say, "So much for 'killing guys.' Go on, Mr. Diver." JAY ANTHONY DIVER, vainly endeavouring to reclaim the thread of their conversation finds himself, abruptly—like some seasoned thespian sleepwalking through a role as familiar to him as the back of his own hand — saying aloud:)*

JAY ANTHONY DIVER: A portrait painter who does landscapes.

*(In some fashion—inexplicable even in considered retrospect—JAY ANTHONY DIVER awakens to the fact that he has arrived at some midpoint, some core, some center...of, at, or within...the otherworldly state in which he finds himself. And so—symmetrically — he adds:)*

Or a landscape painter who does portraits.

GINEVRA: *(genuinely intrigued)* And what was it that he wrote, Mr. Diver?

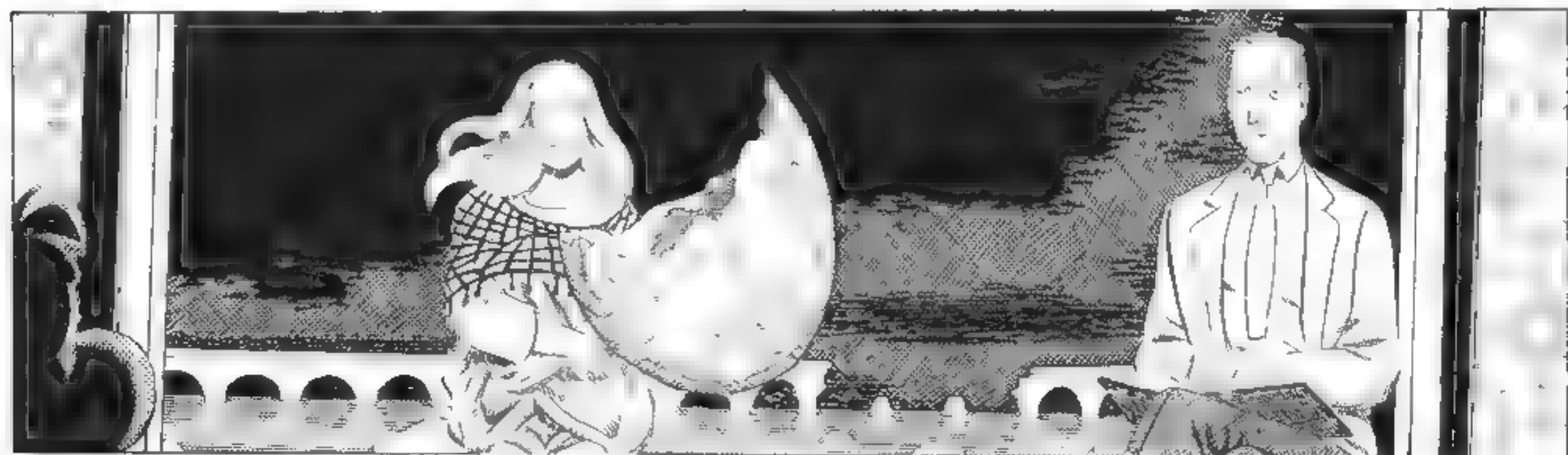
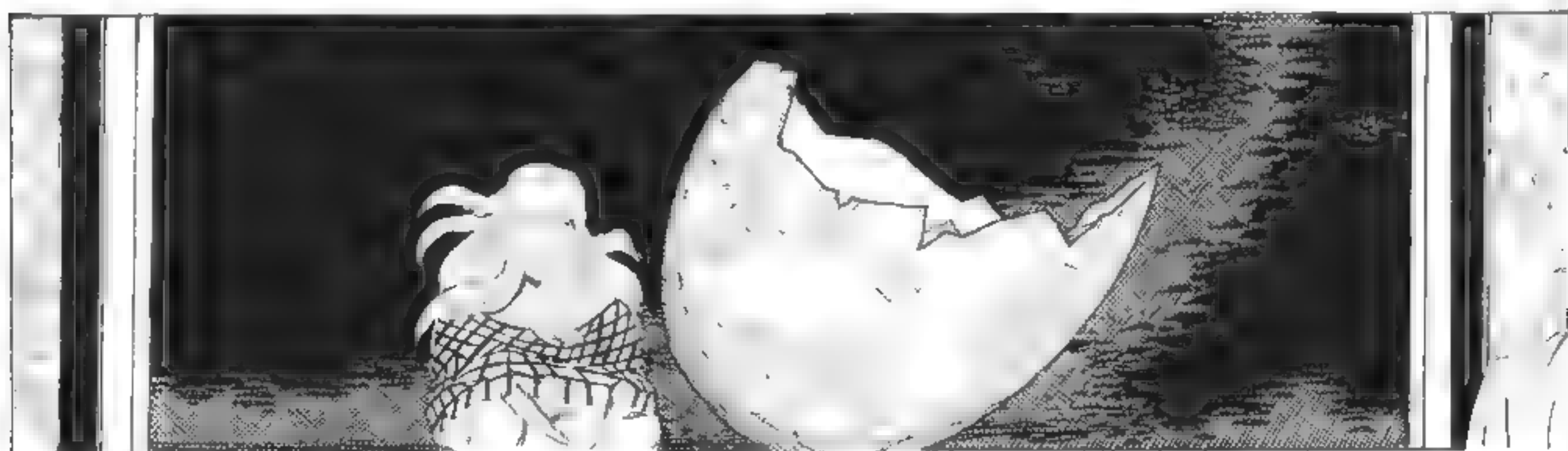
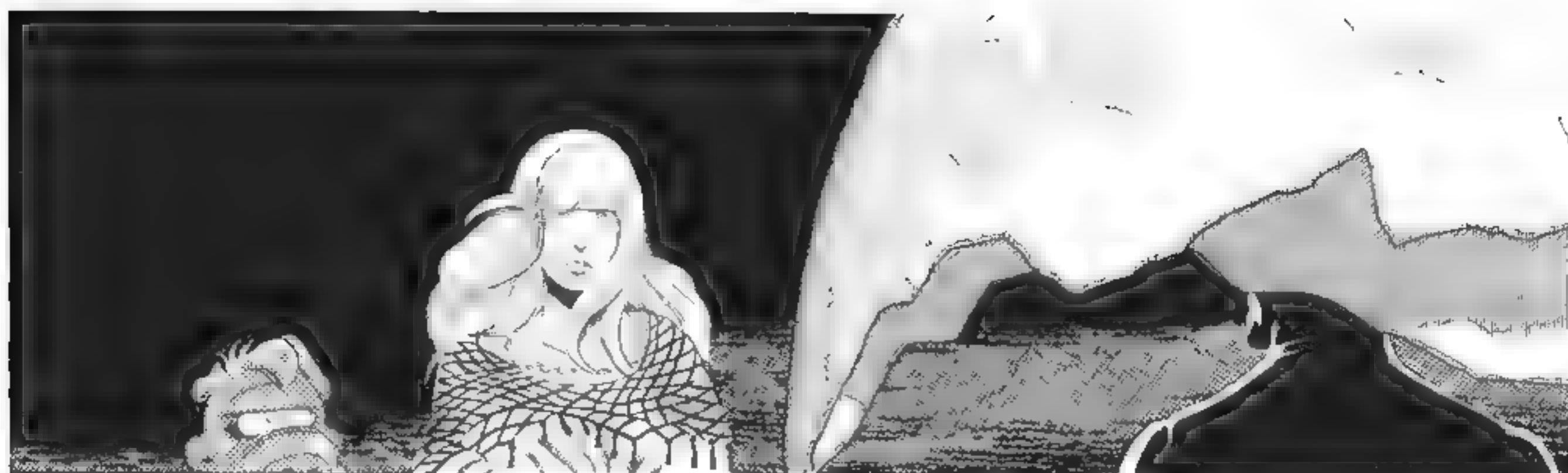
*(And, from memory, JAY ANTHONY DIVER begins to recite:)*

In the weeks consumed by the completion of the painting no further word regarding payment had passed between them. At last, the painter removed the engraving from its resting place on the wallpaper (of his own design) and replaced it with the finished work.

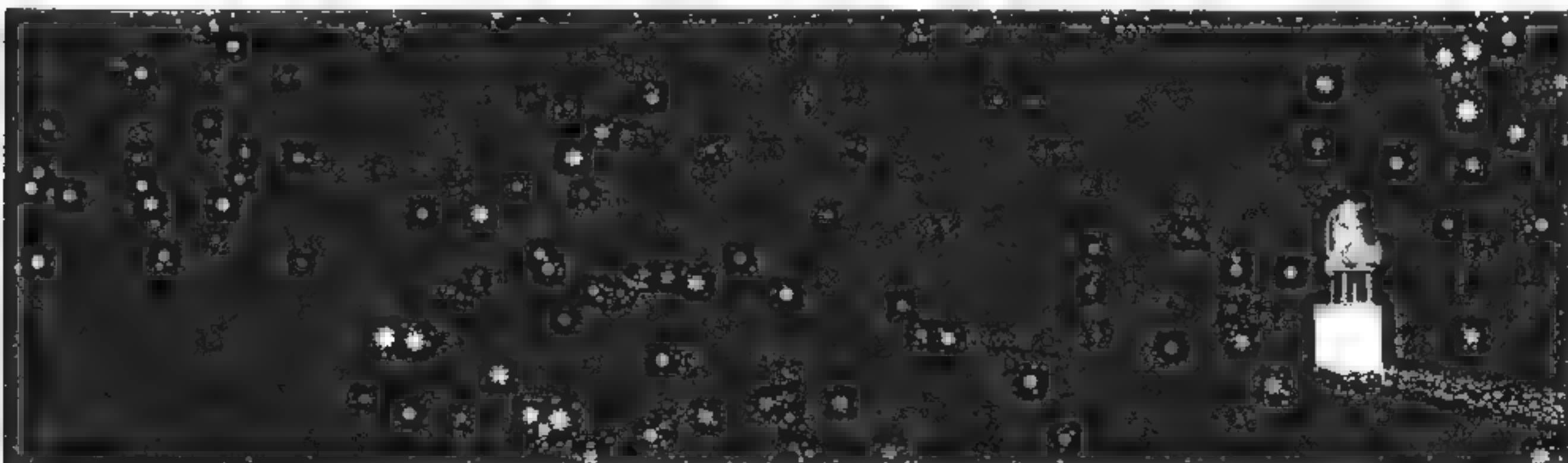
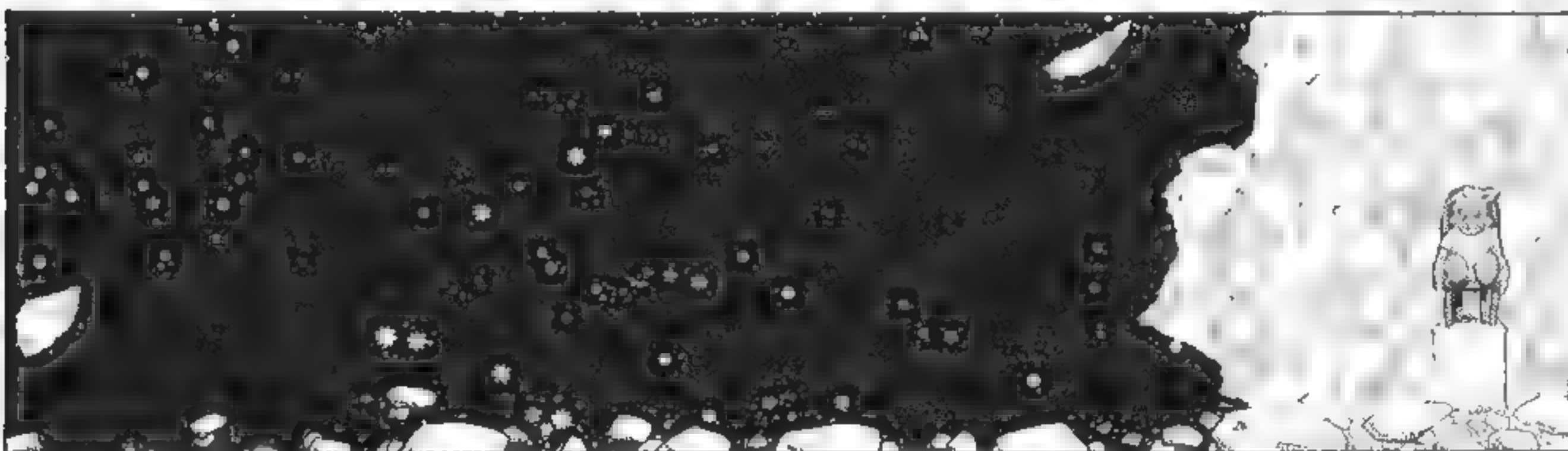
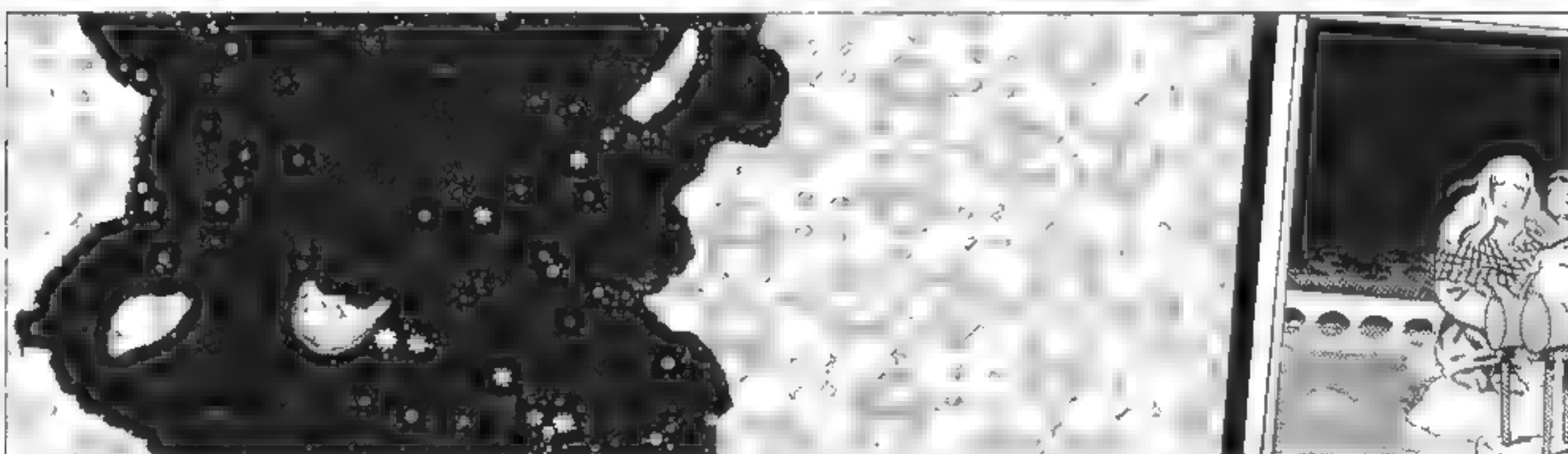
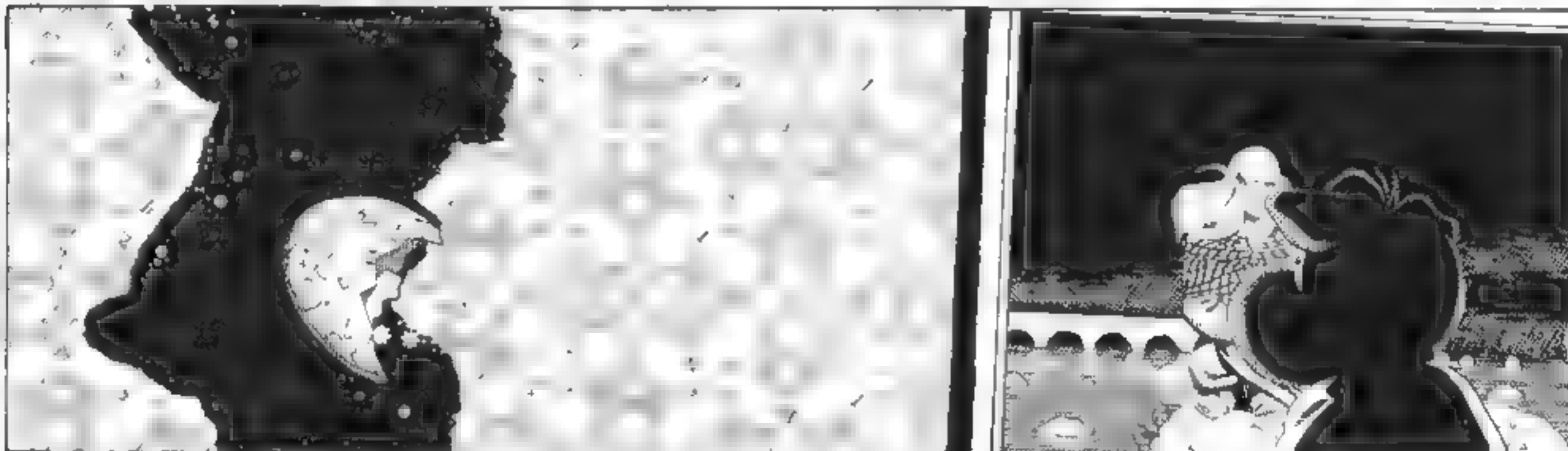
They sat, for the most part, in silent and separate reverie, conversing only sporadically and then lapsing into silence once more. They parted company that night, patron and artist, with a formality that was not without human warmth. They knew they would never see each other again.

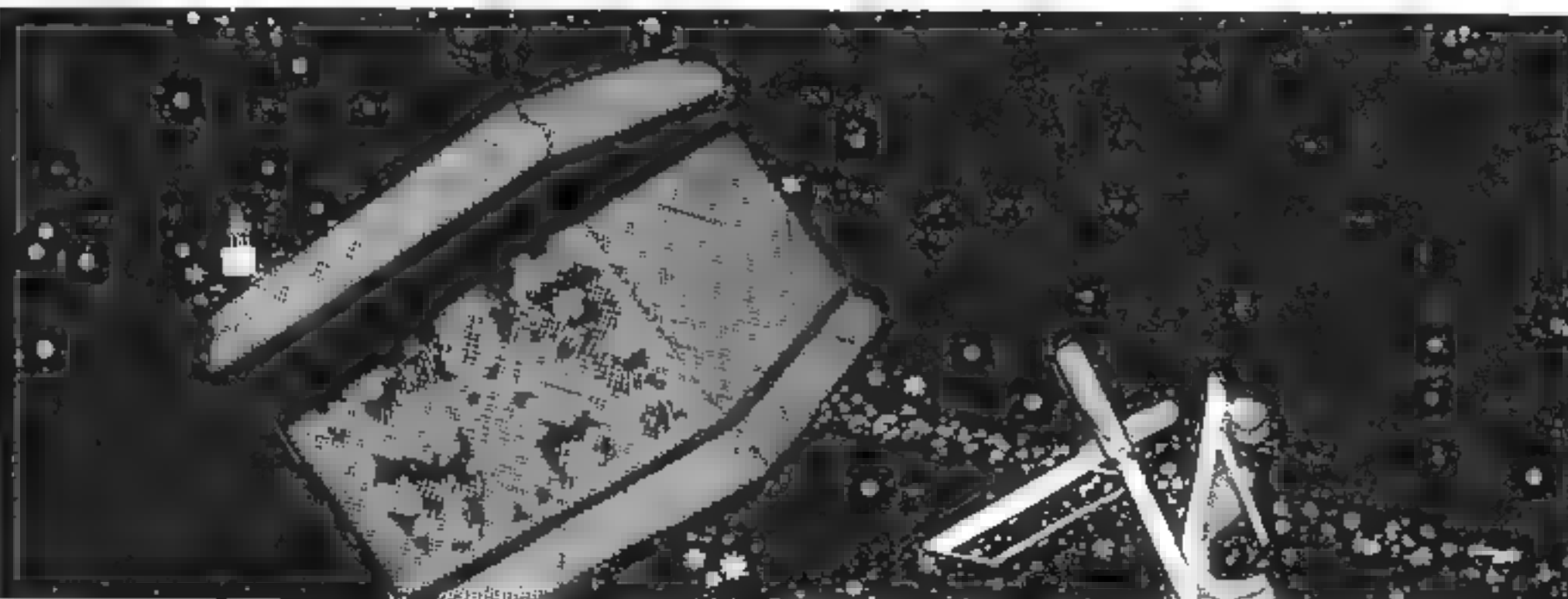
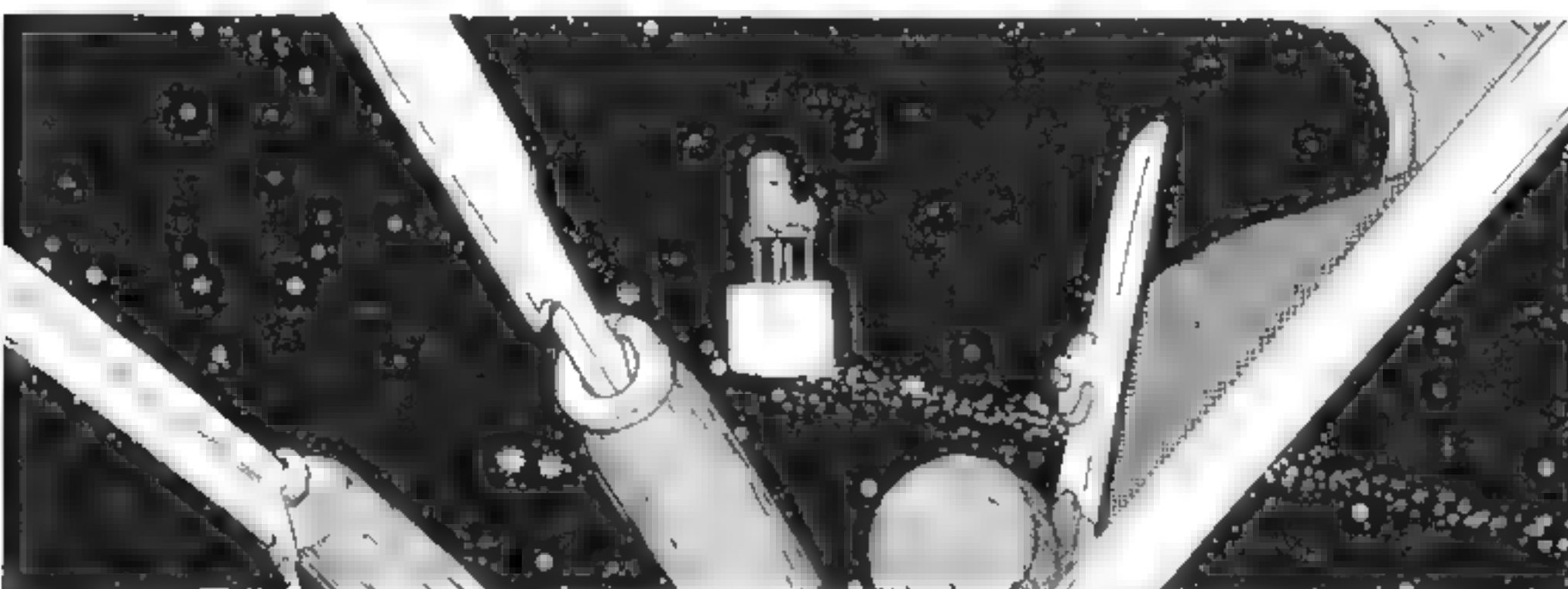
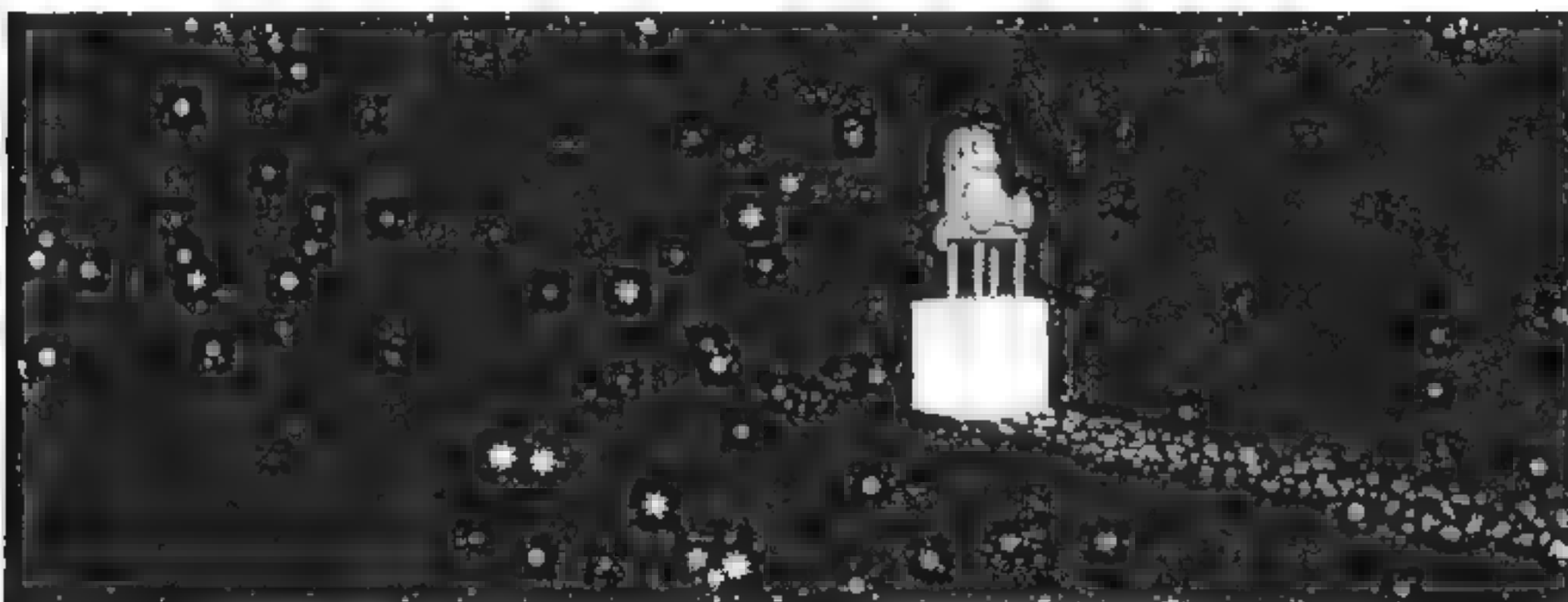
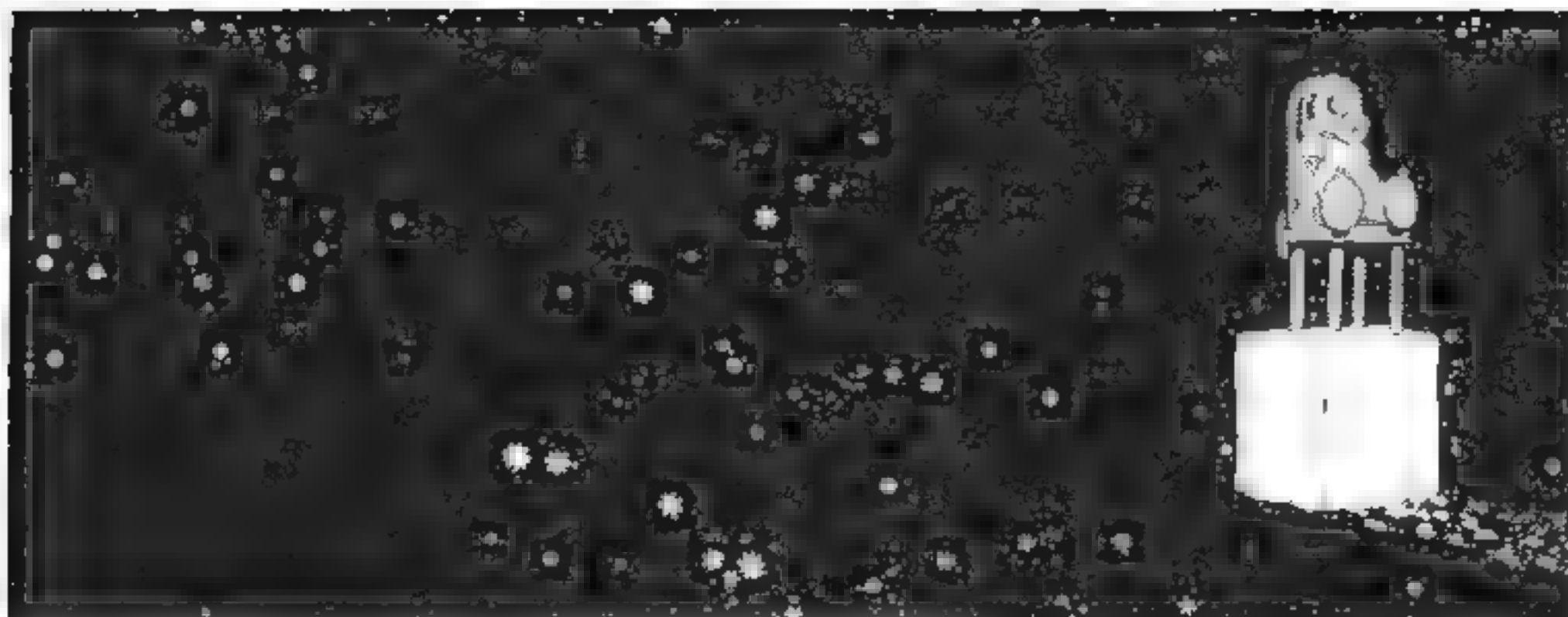
A package arrived at his studio the next day which contained a small chest of solid gold, intricately carved and inlaid with precious stones. Within the box, resting on the finest purple velvet, was an eggshell









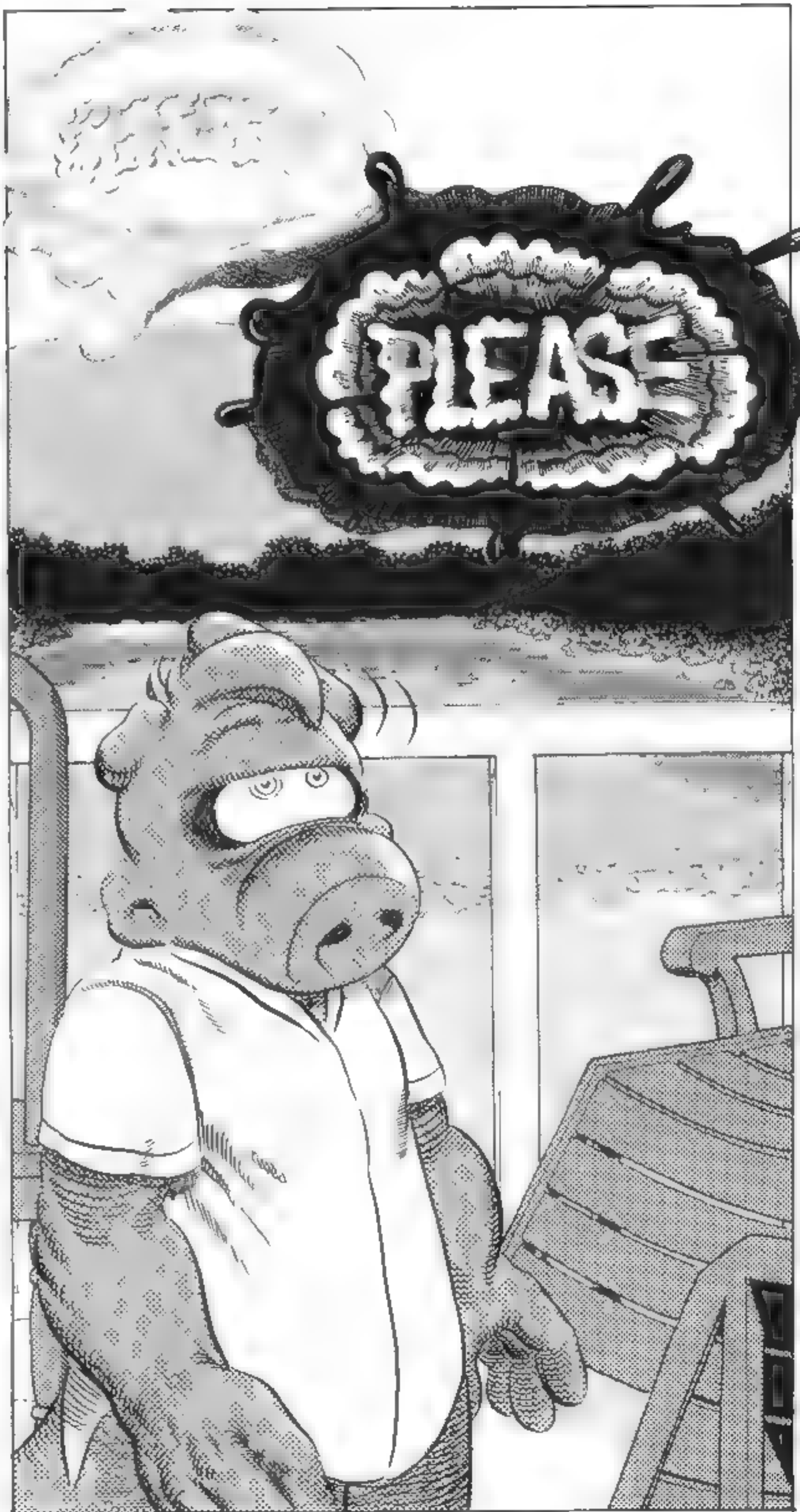


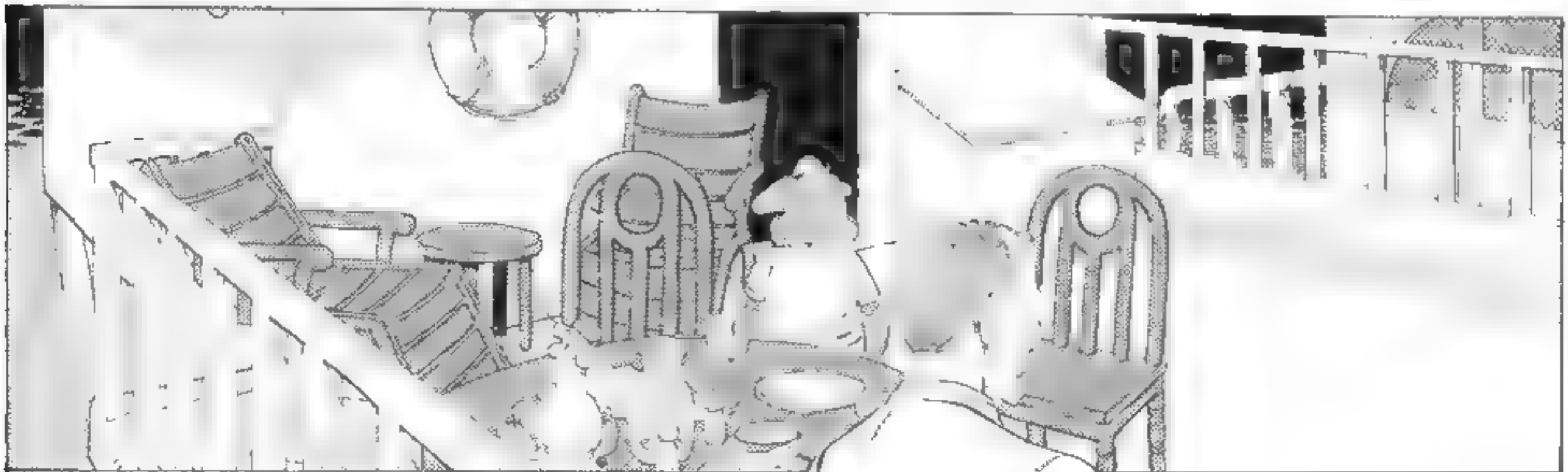
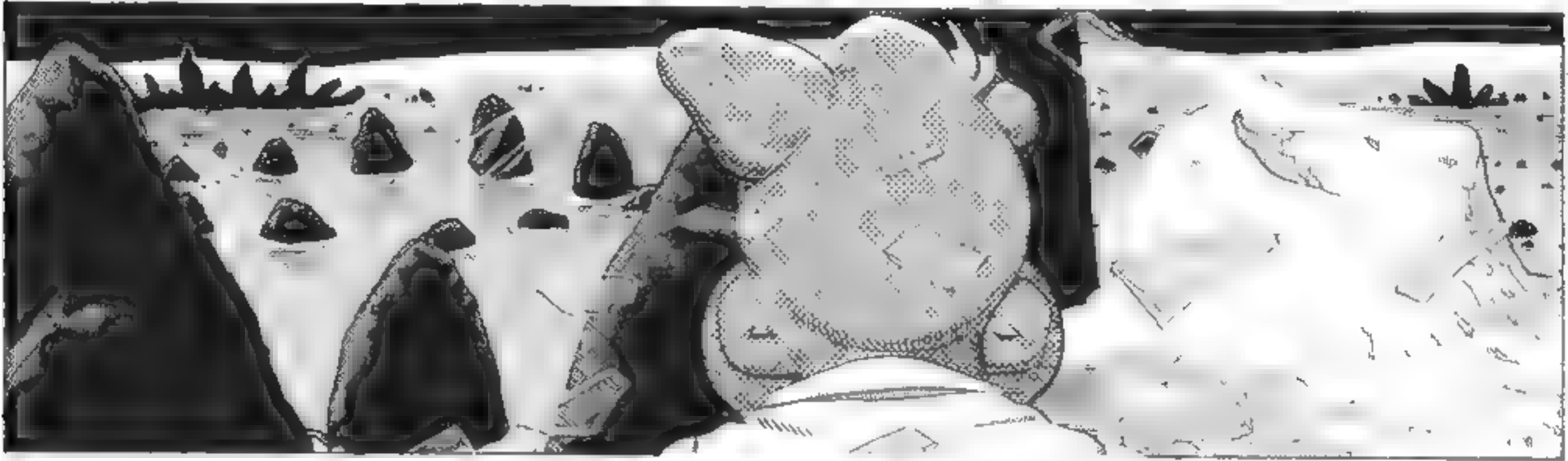
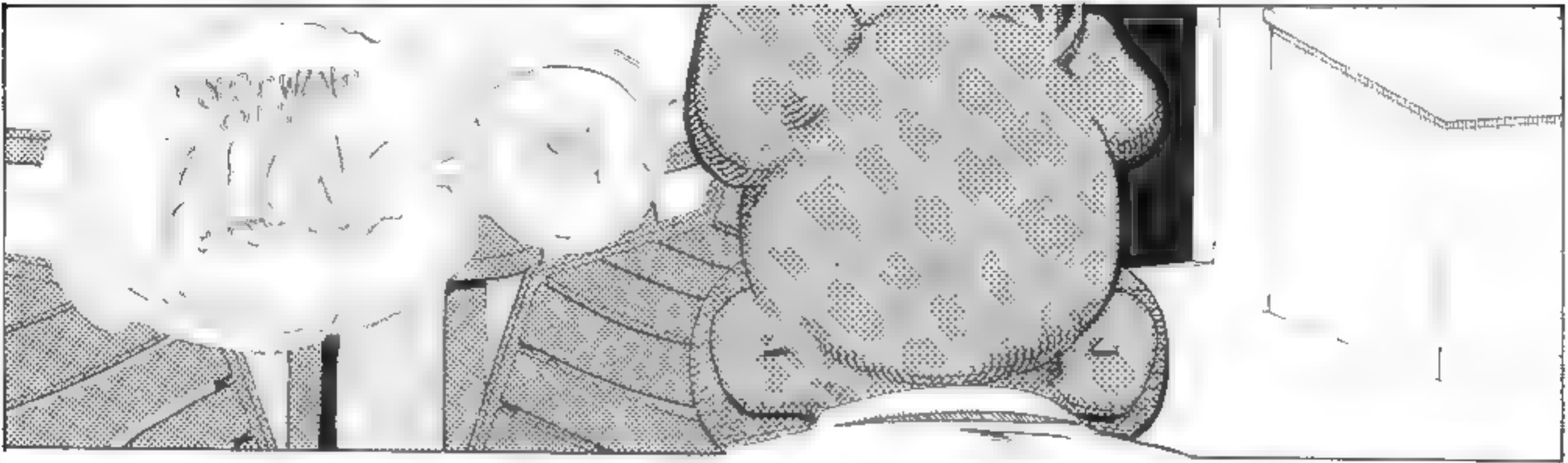
adorned with a pastel flourish, painstakingly rendered in imitation of the wallpaper design which framed his picture, unmistakably rendered in an amateur's hand. The eggshell had been broken, carefully, into two pieces. Each night, after completing his work, he would sit contemplating the box and the eggshell halves within. He purchased some fine wood and an inexpensive set of small saws and chisels and planes. After several weeks, his hands scarred and his nails splintered, he had constructed a small, lop-sided ebony box whose lid did not fit properly. On its front was carved a relief of that same wallpaper pattern, crude but recognizable. He lined the box with one of his best silk handkerchiefs: placed one half of the eggshell within it, and had it sent, by courier, to her residence.



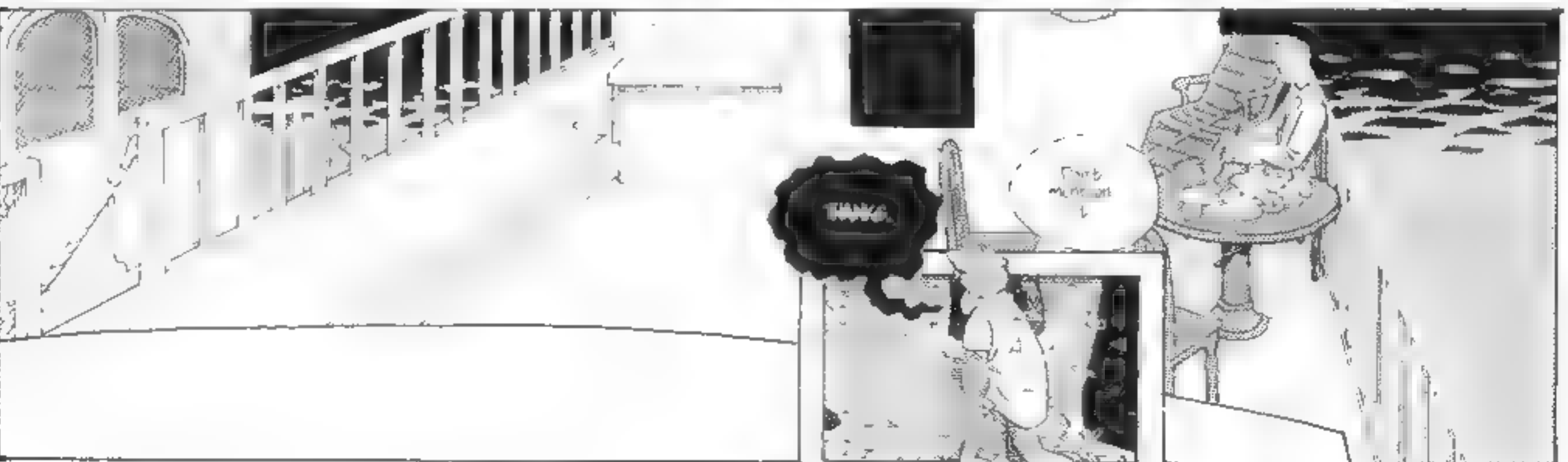
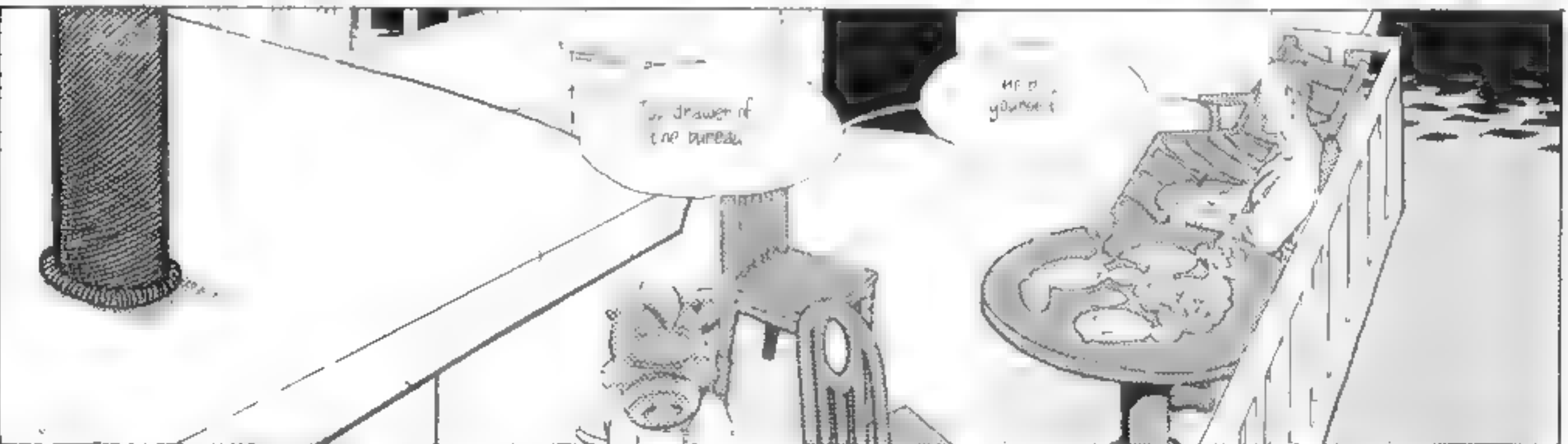
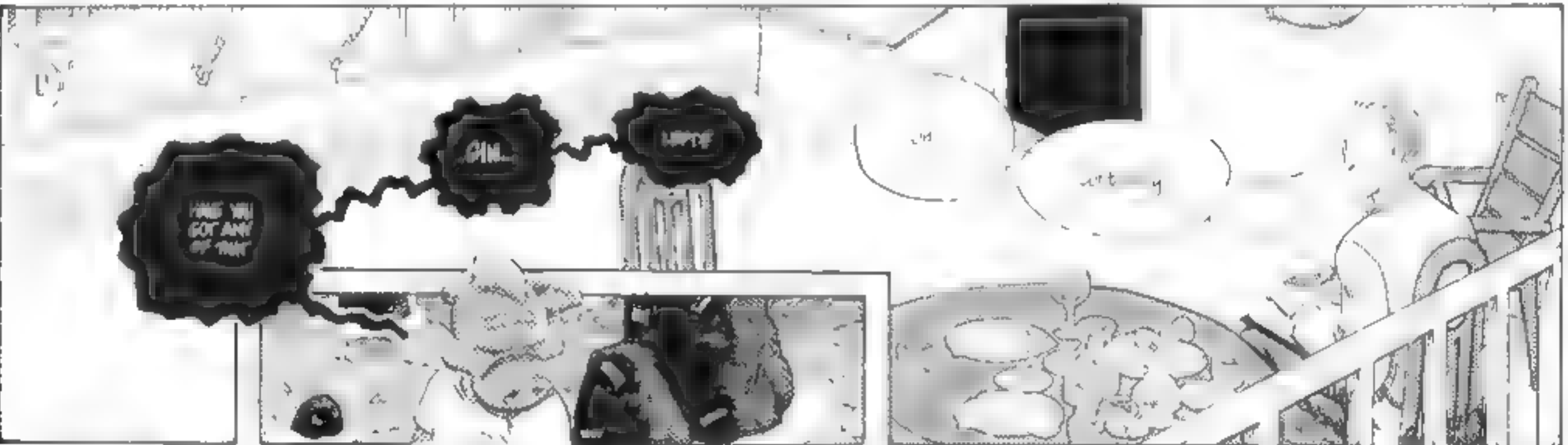
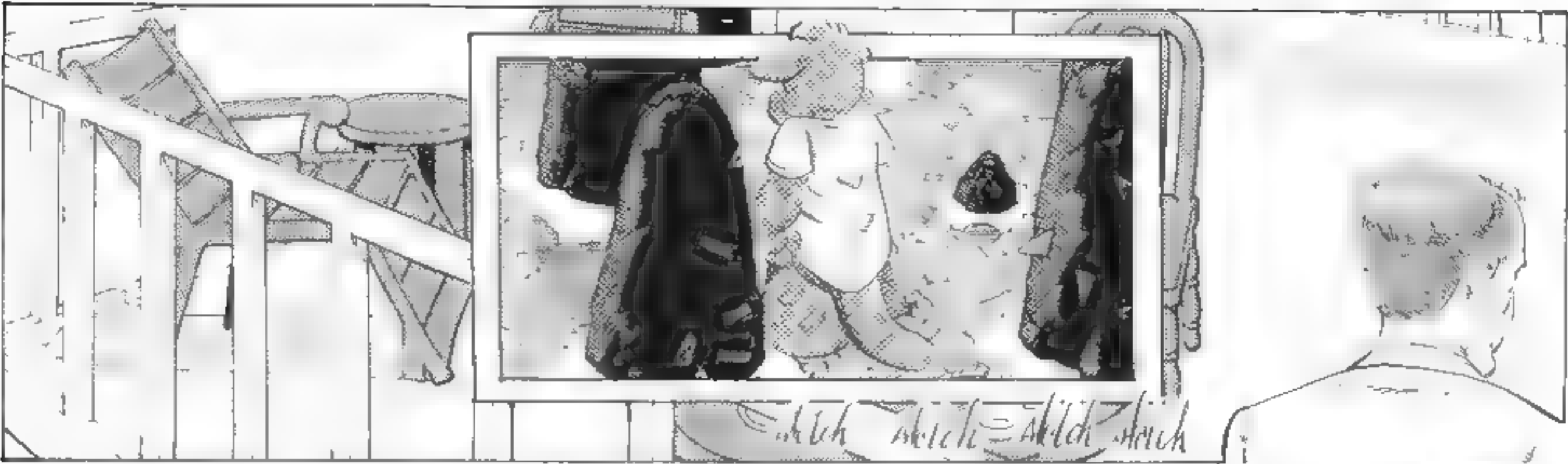




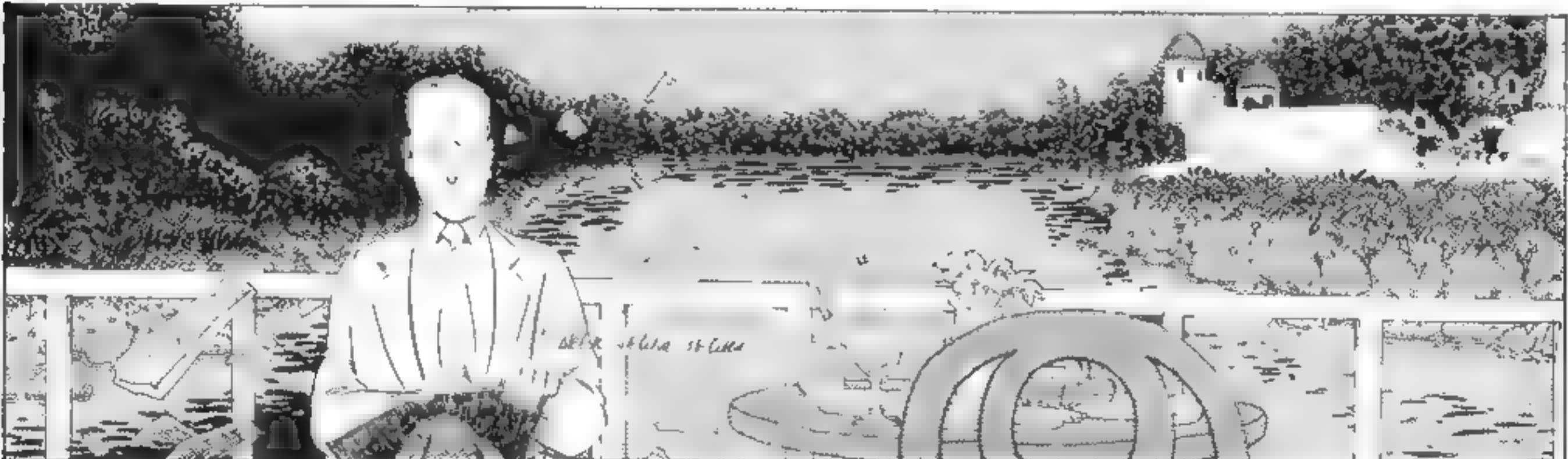
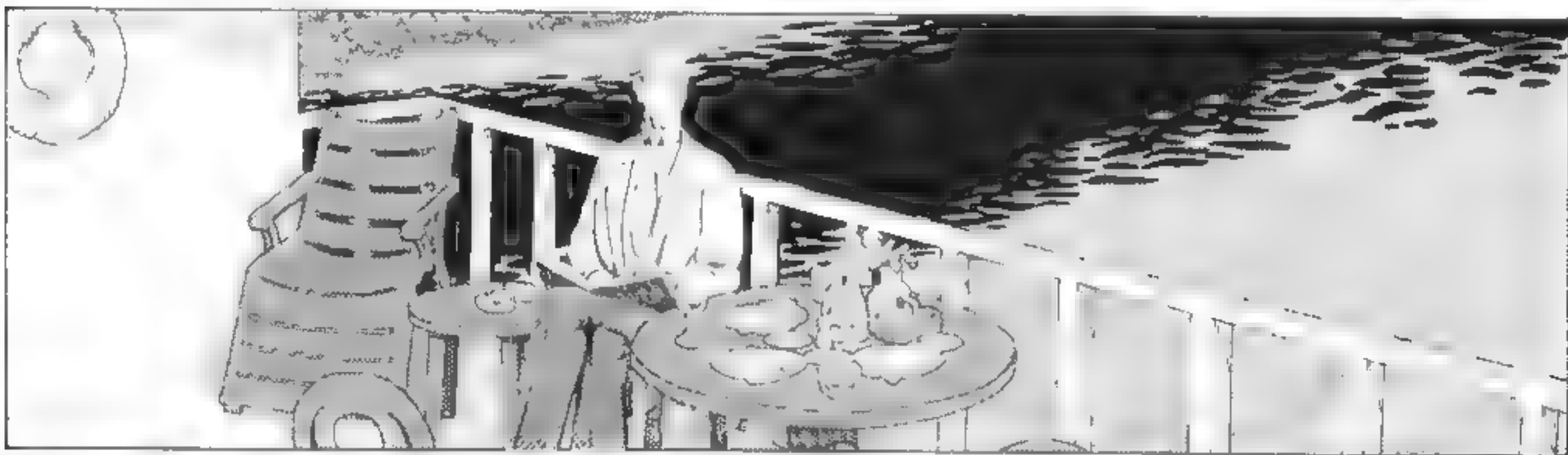
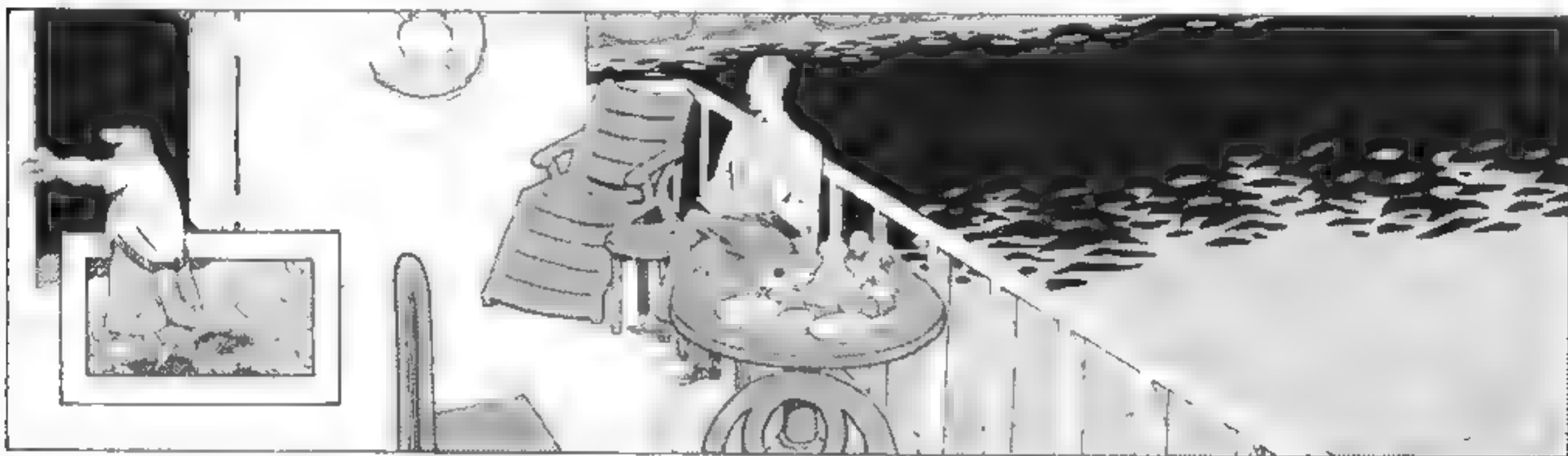


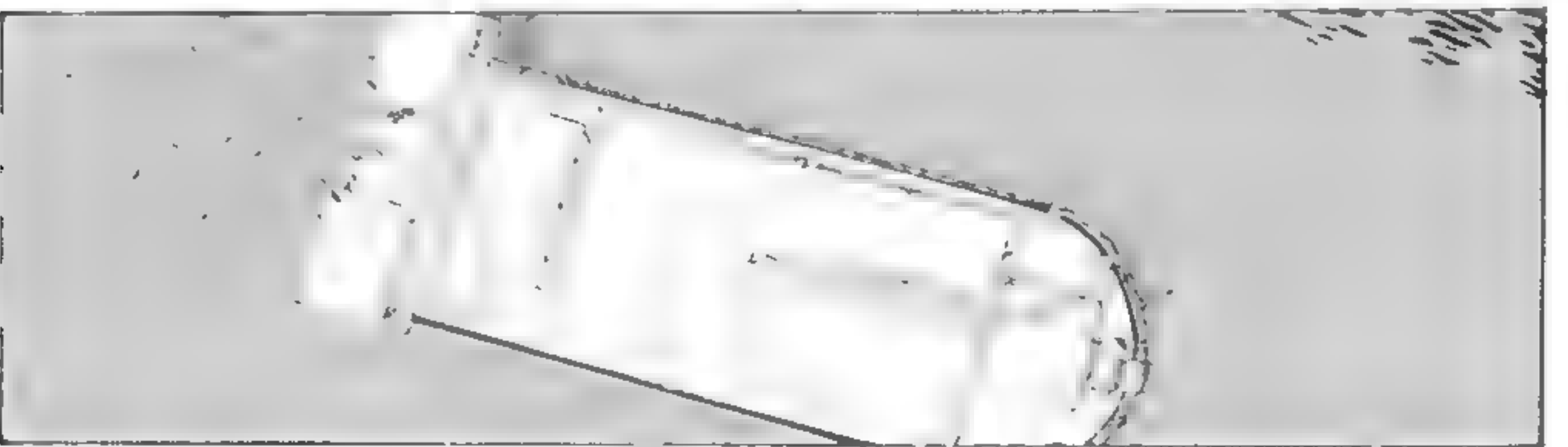
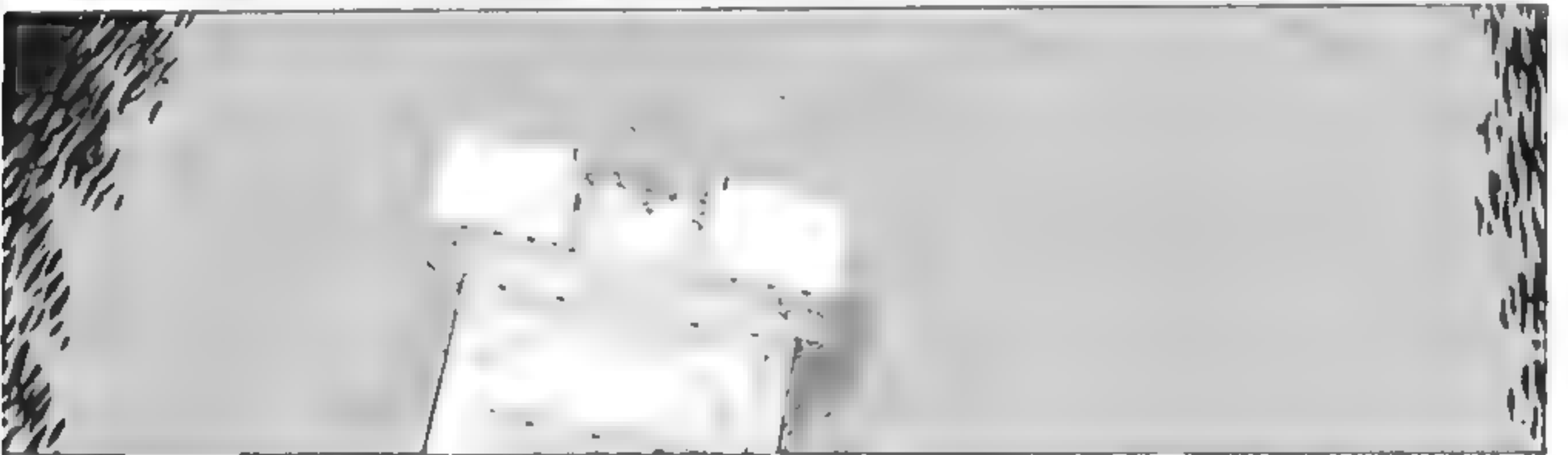
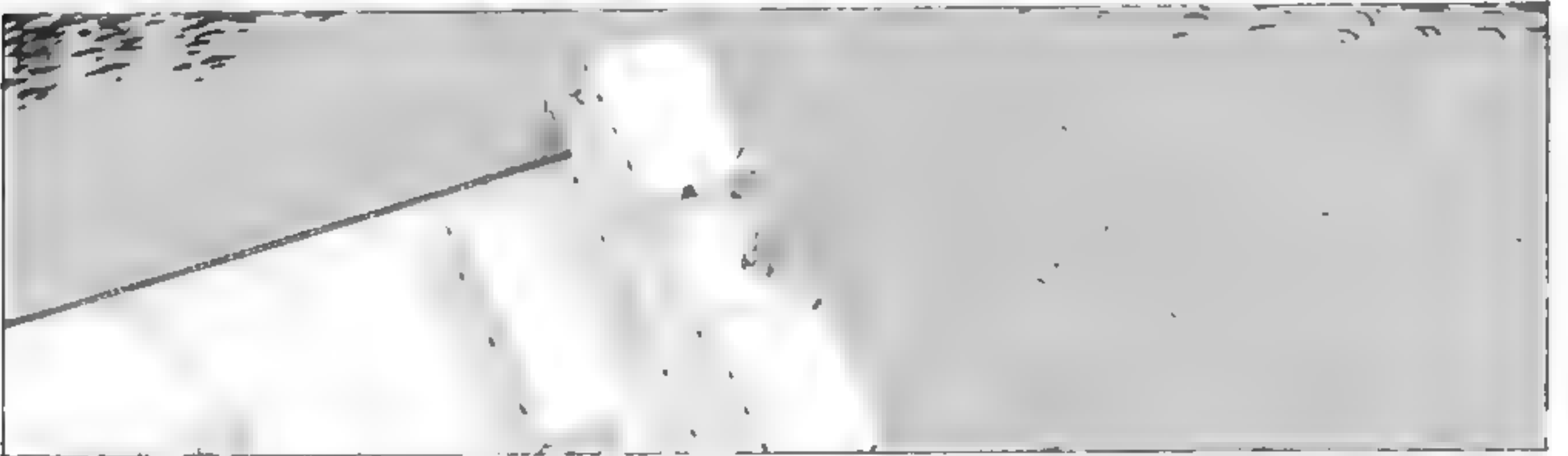
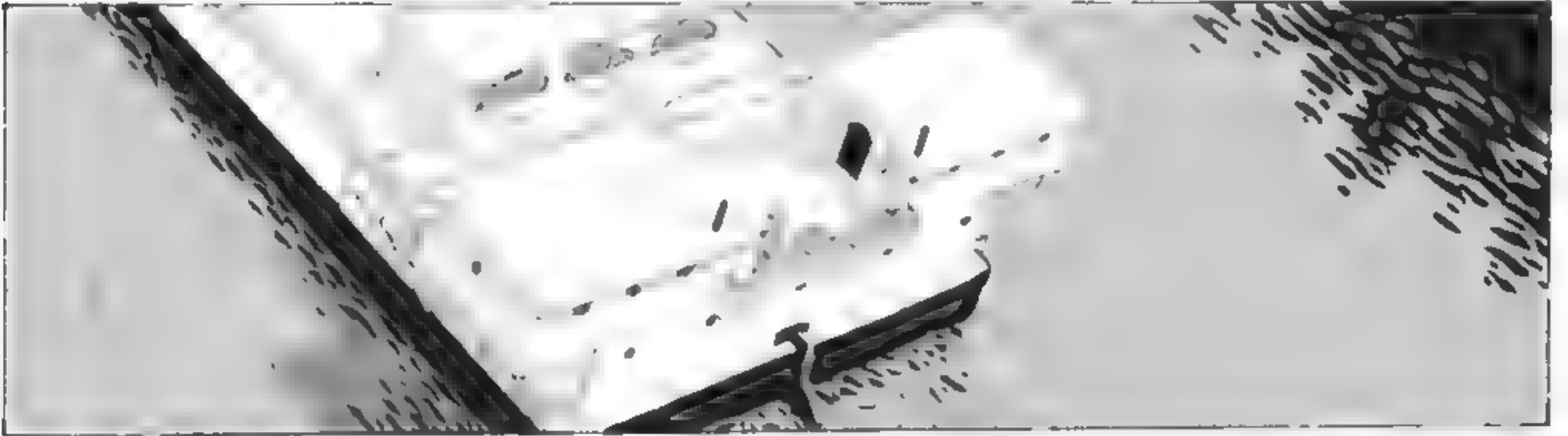
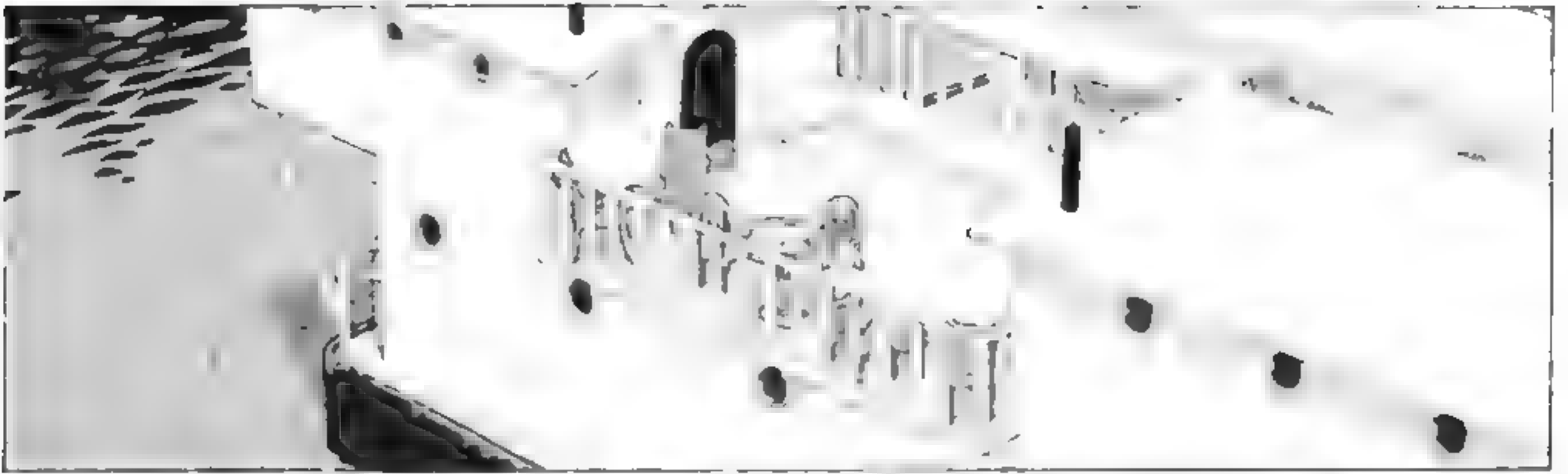


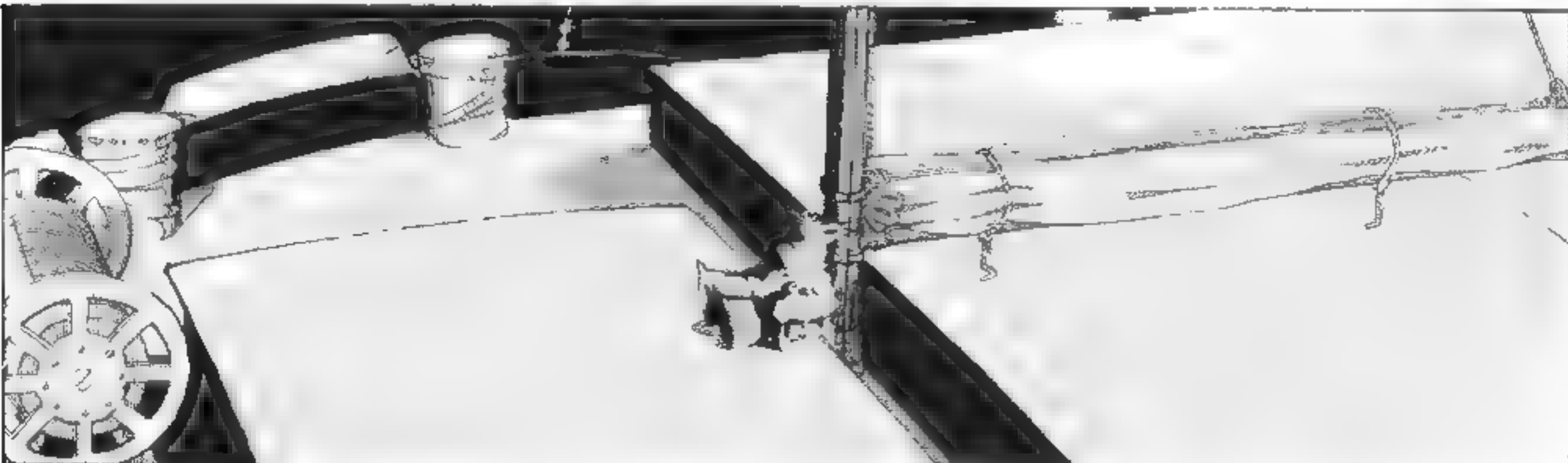
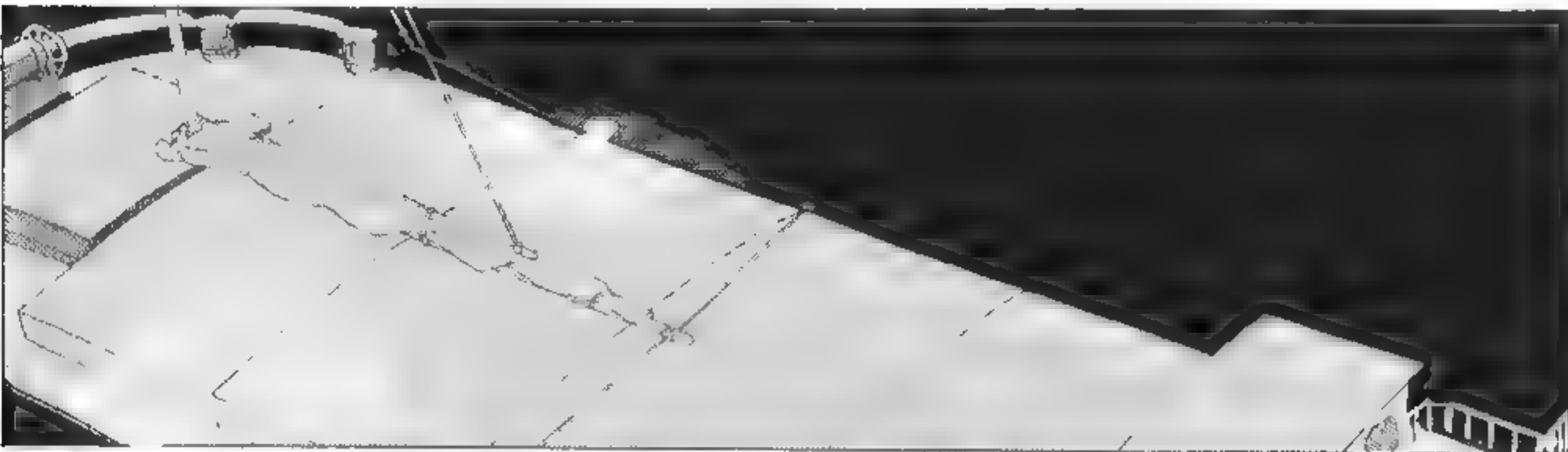
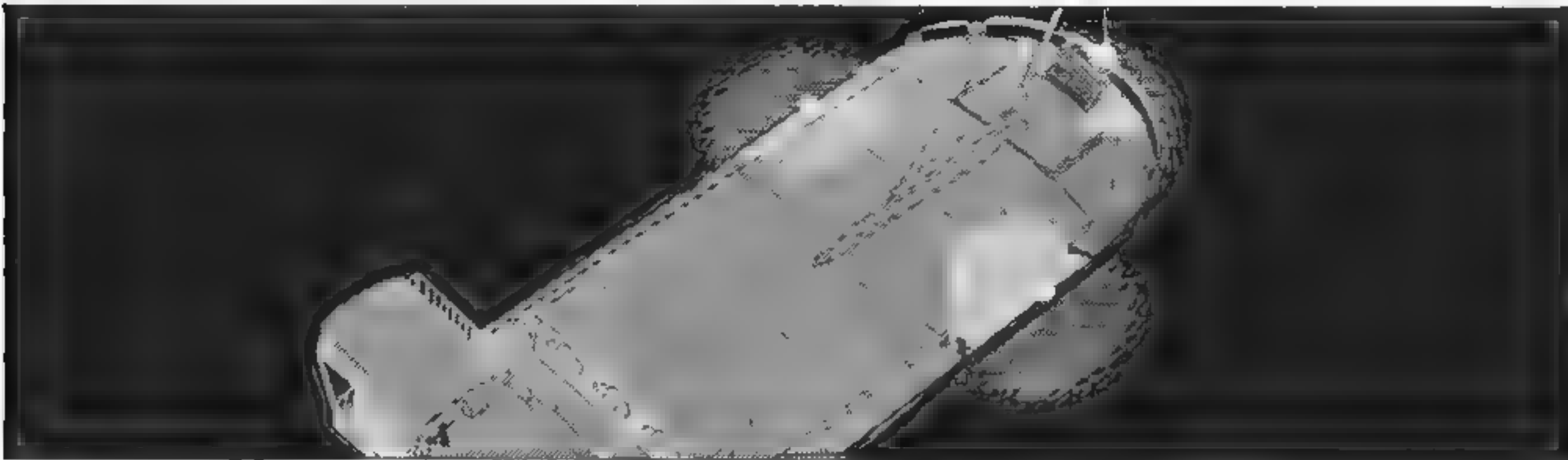
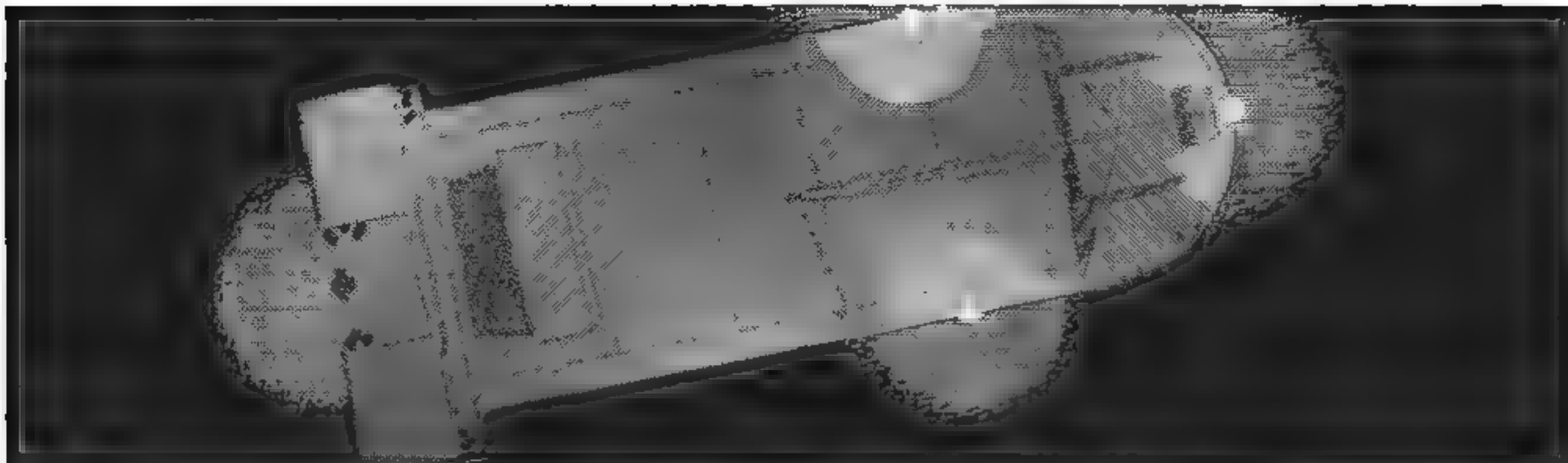




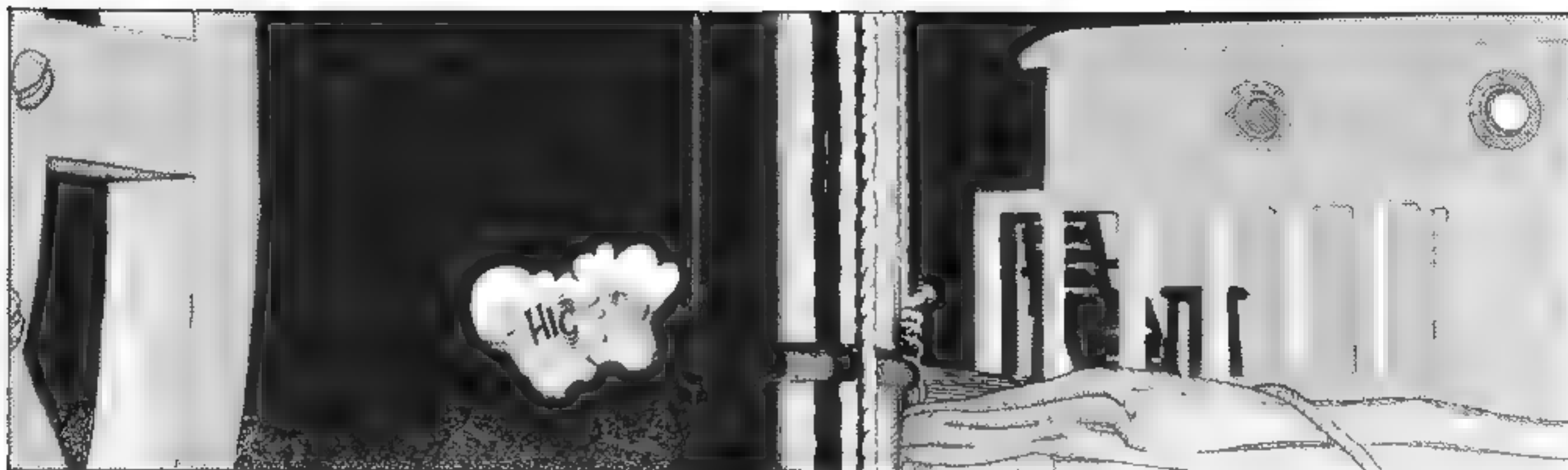






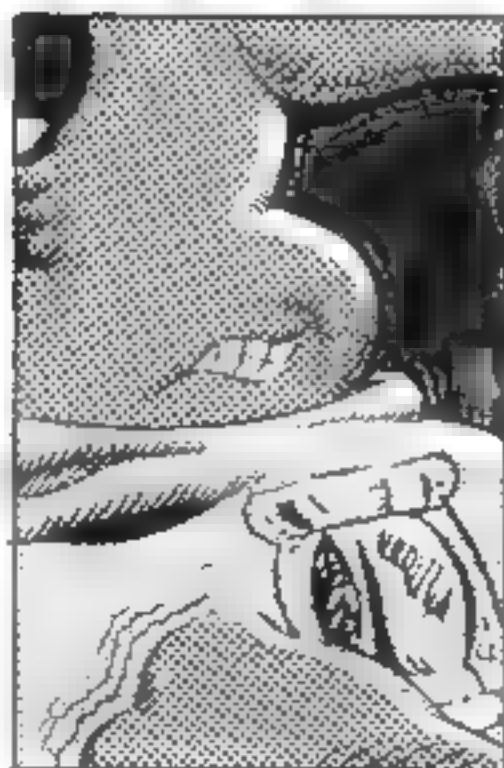
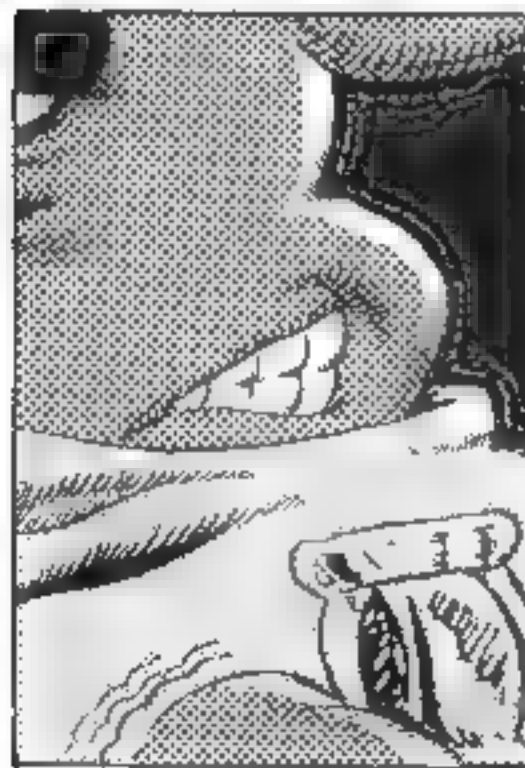


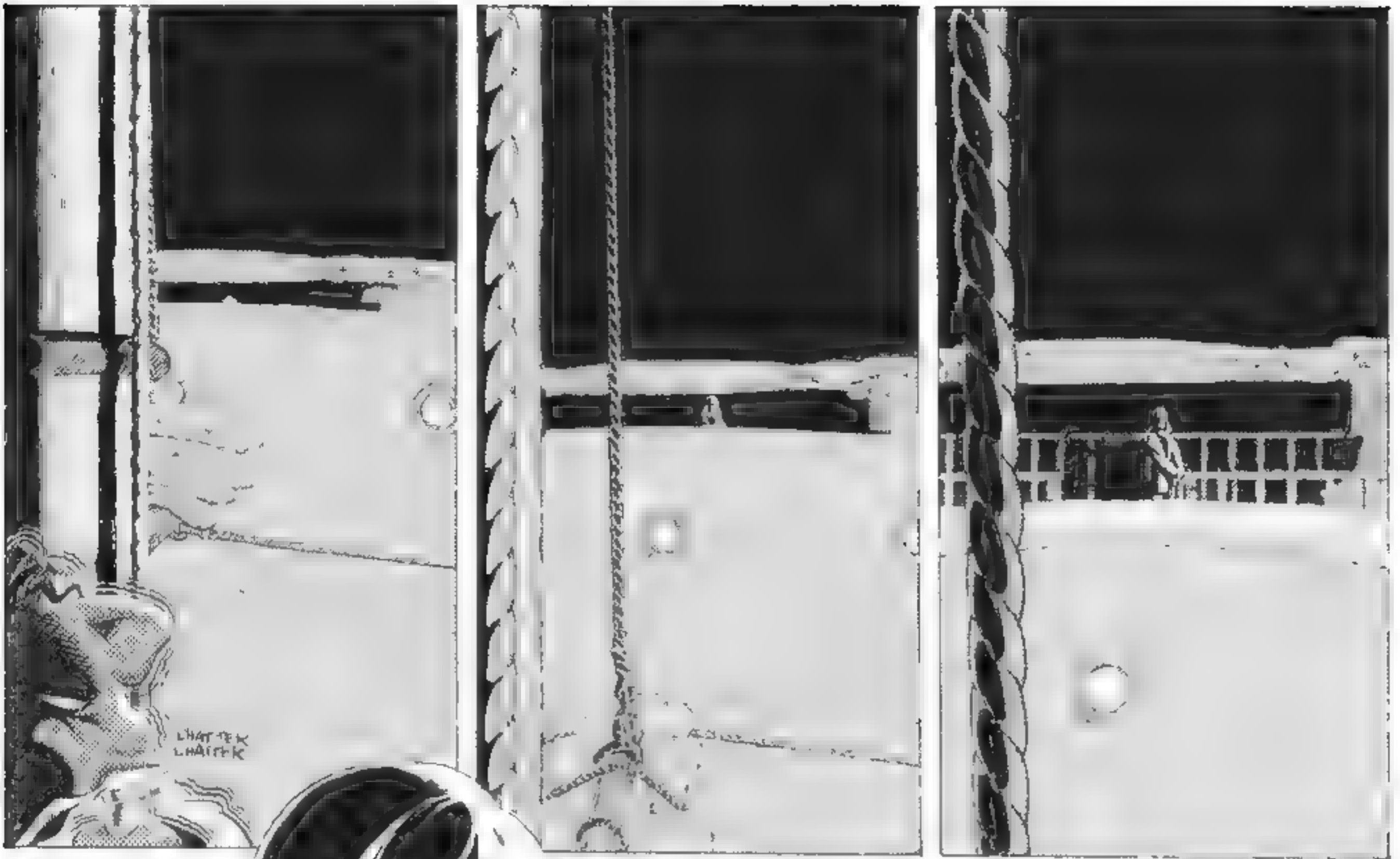




get you off on the right foot. Don't tell her you tried to hit me. She wouldn't like that. After that, just be happy every damn minute of your waking life and you've got her for as long as you want her."

He waited for that to sink in. I nodded.



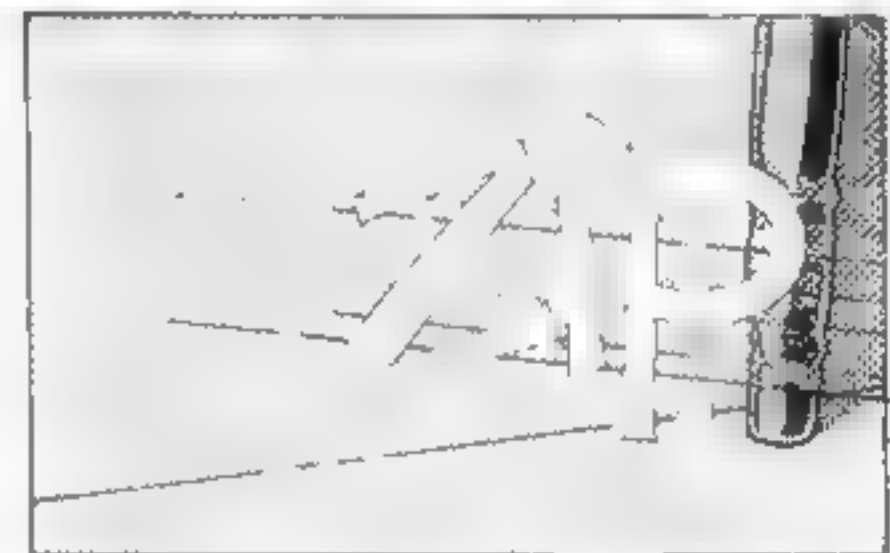
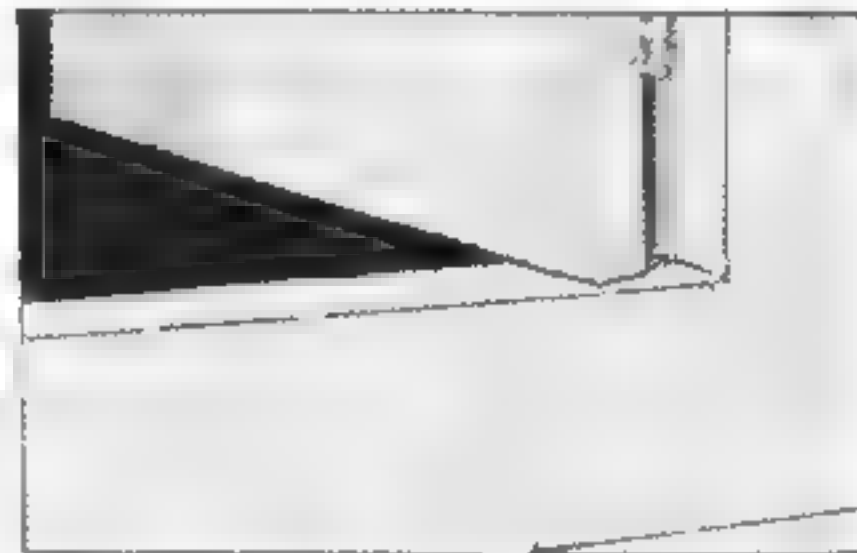
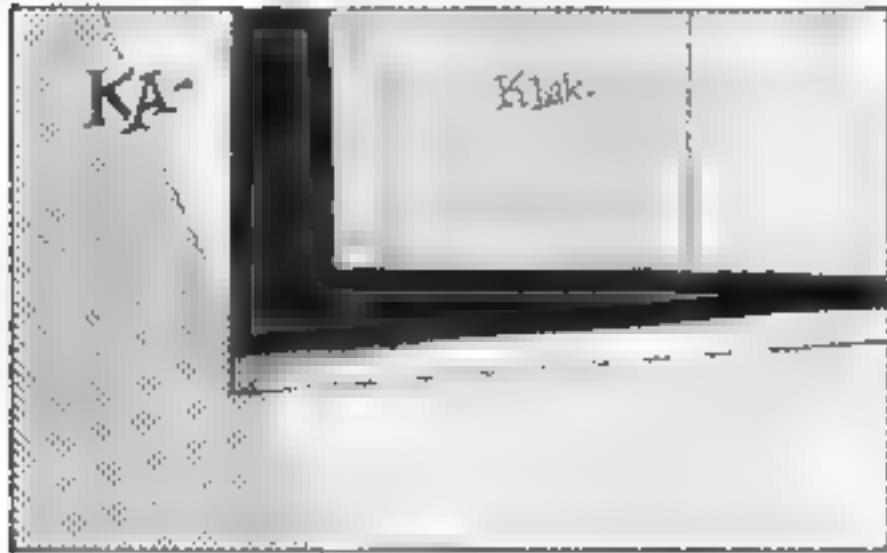










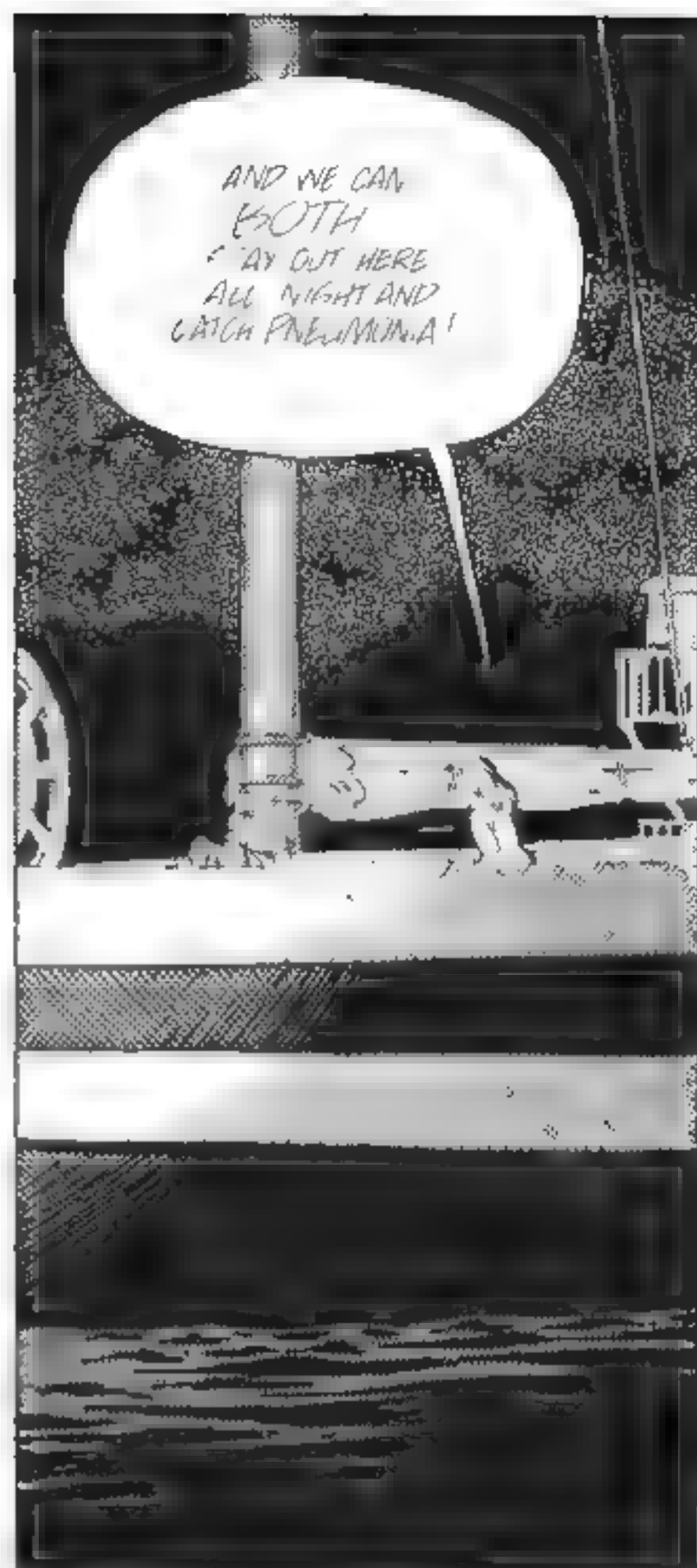










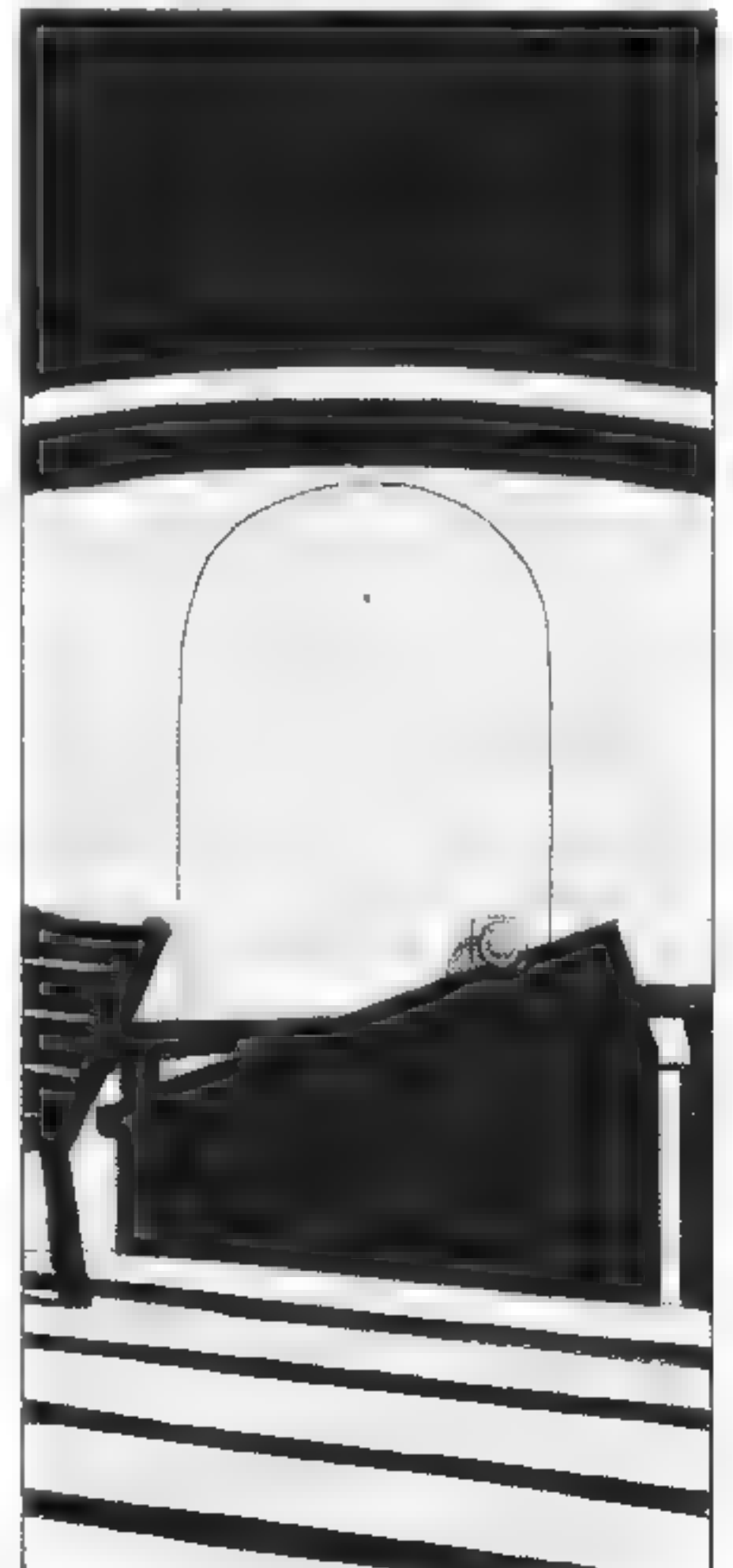


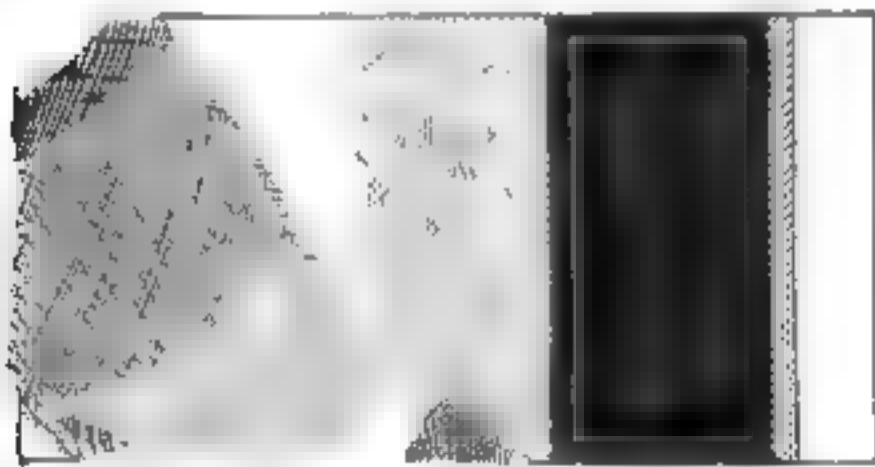
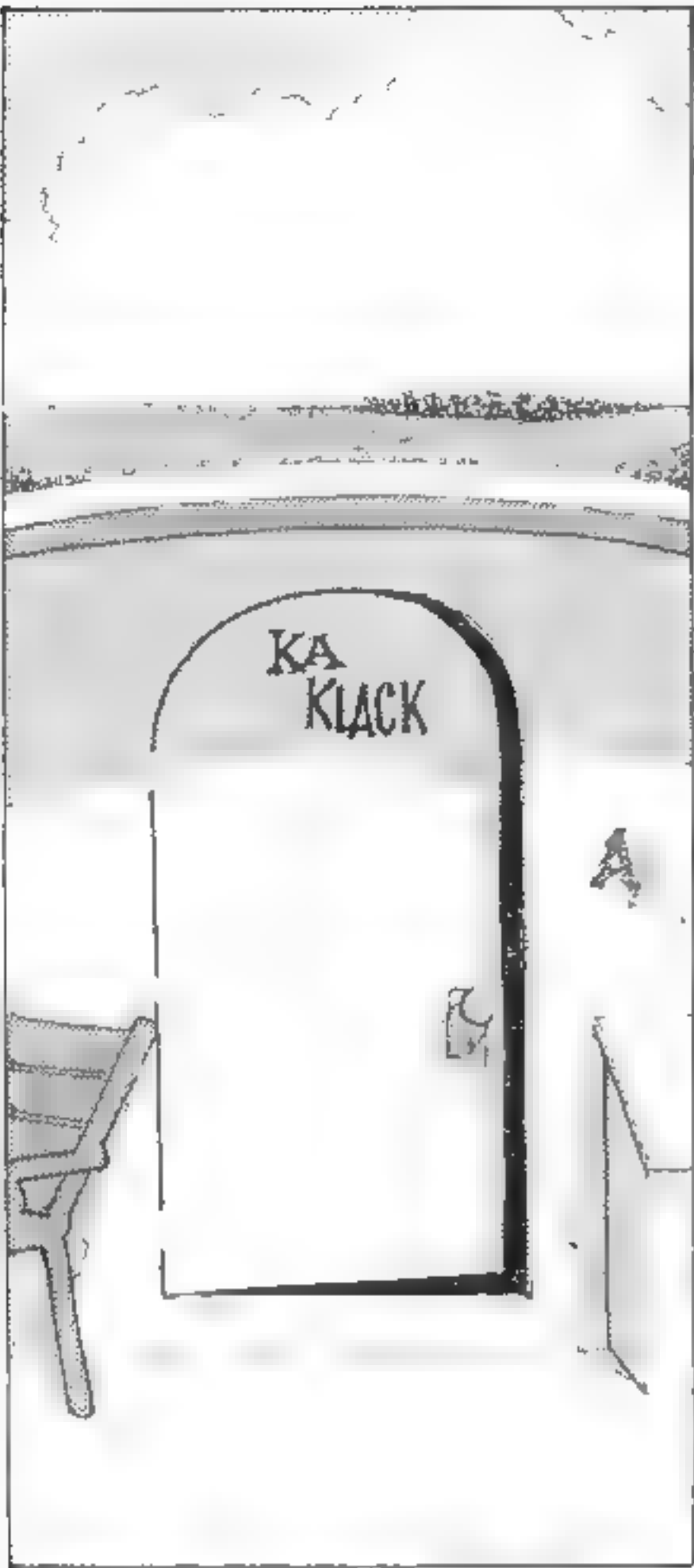




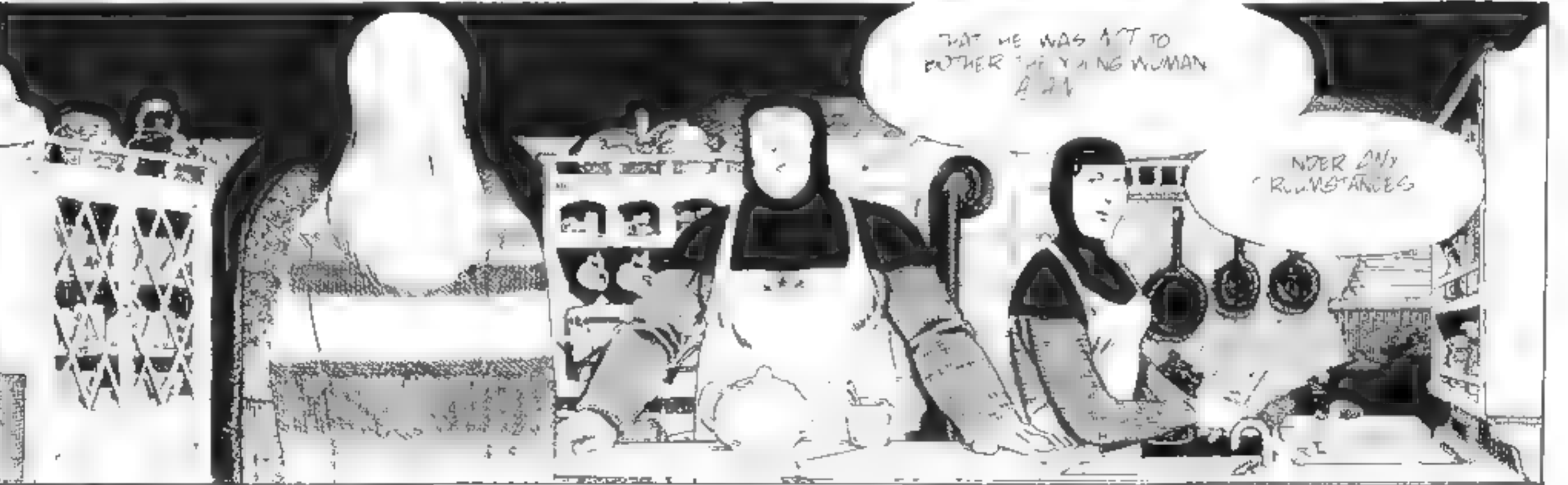
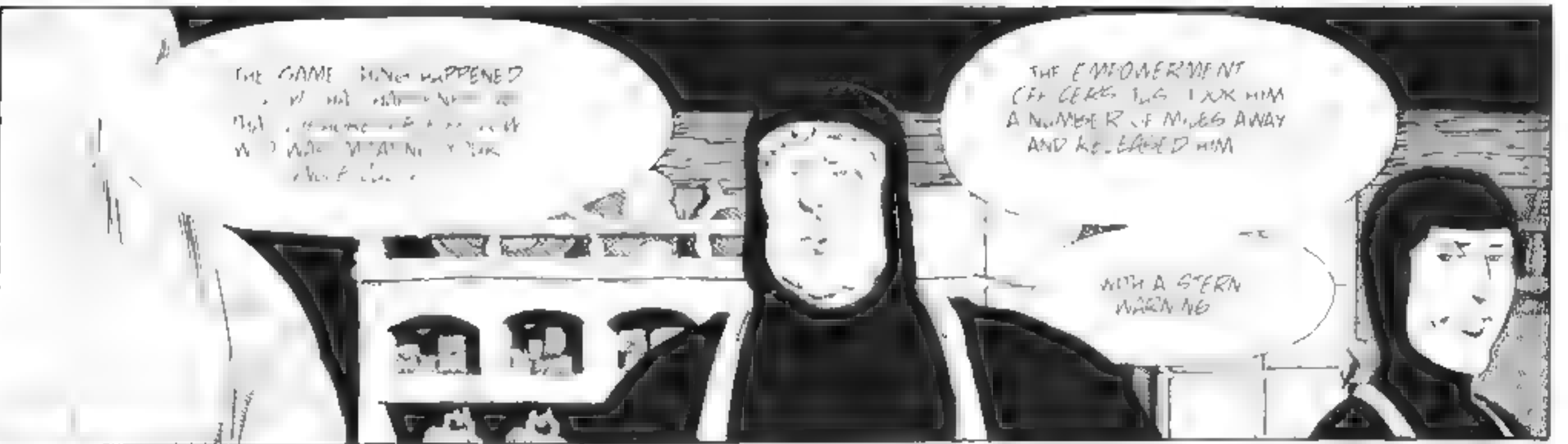
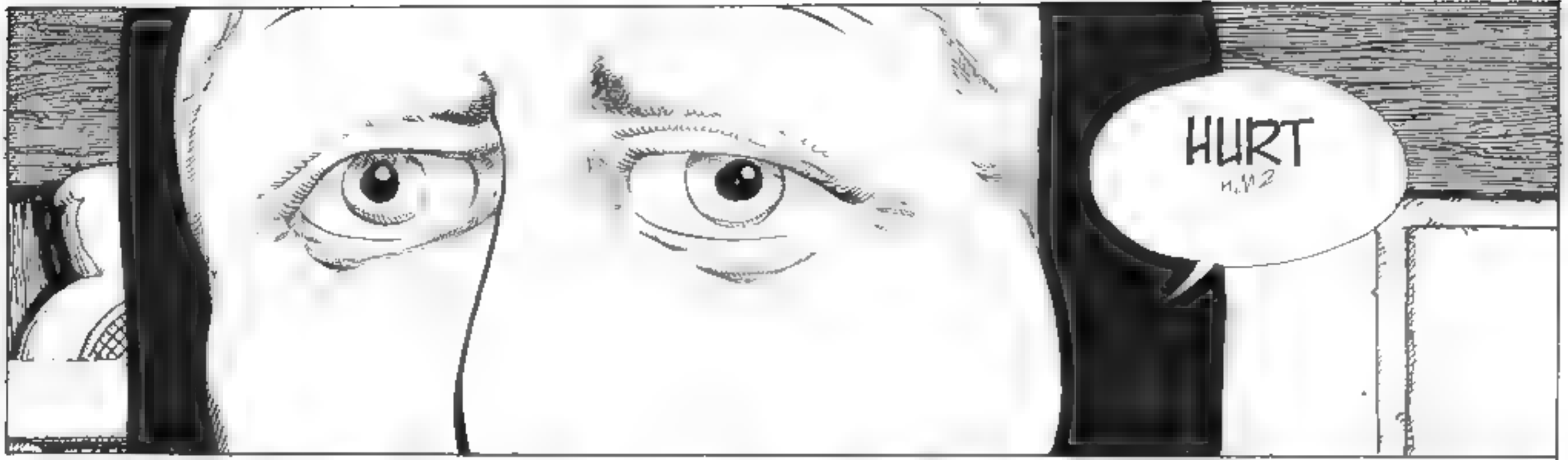


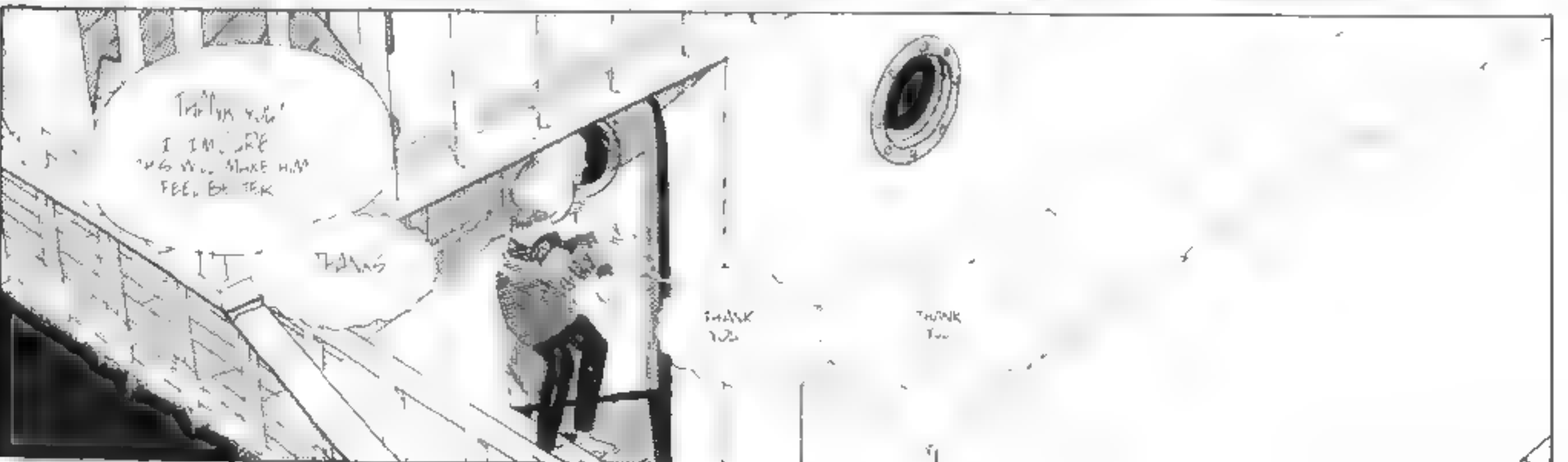
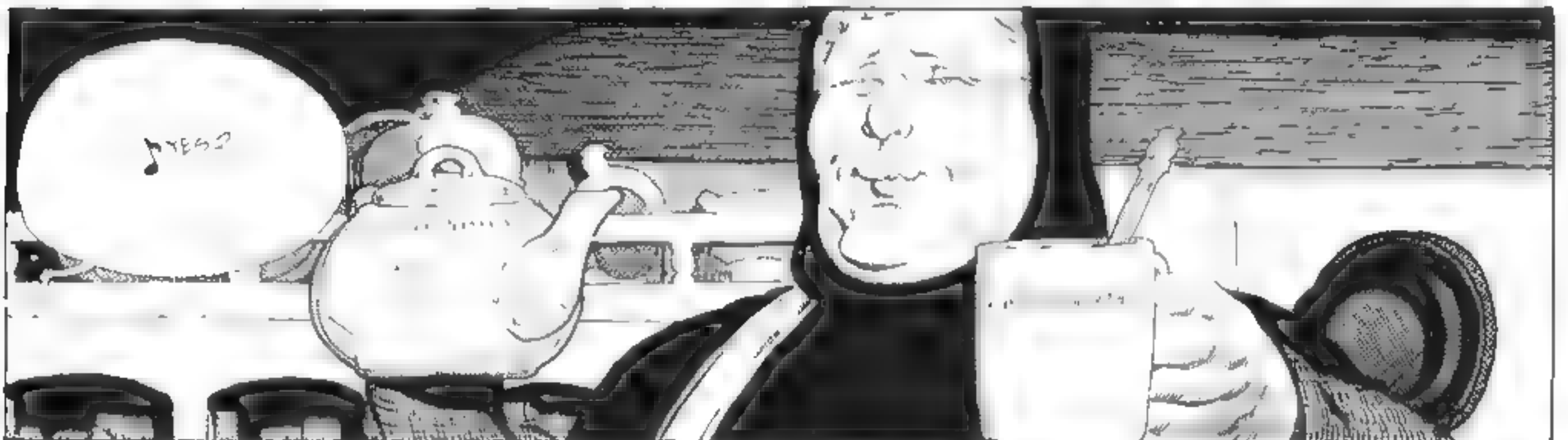
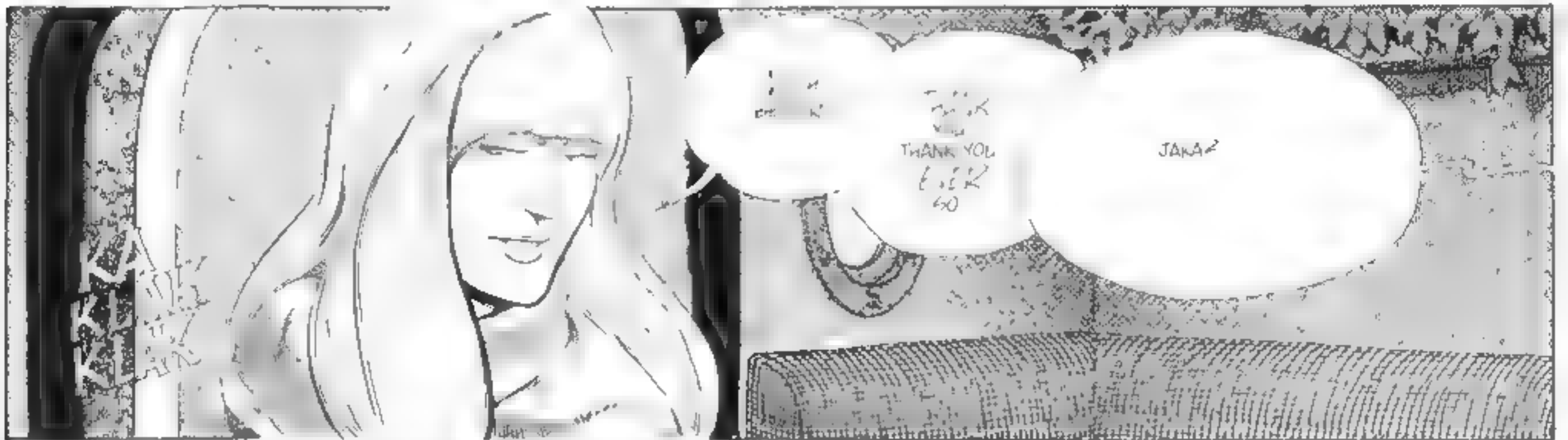
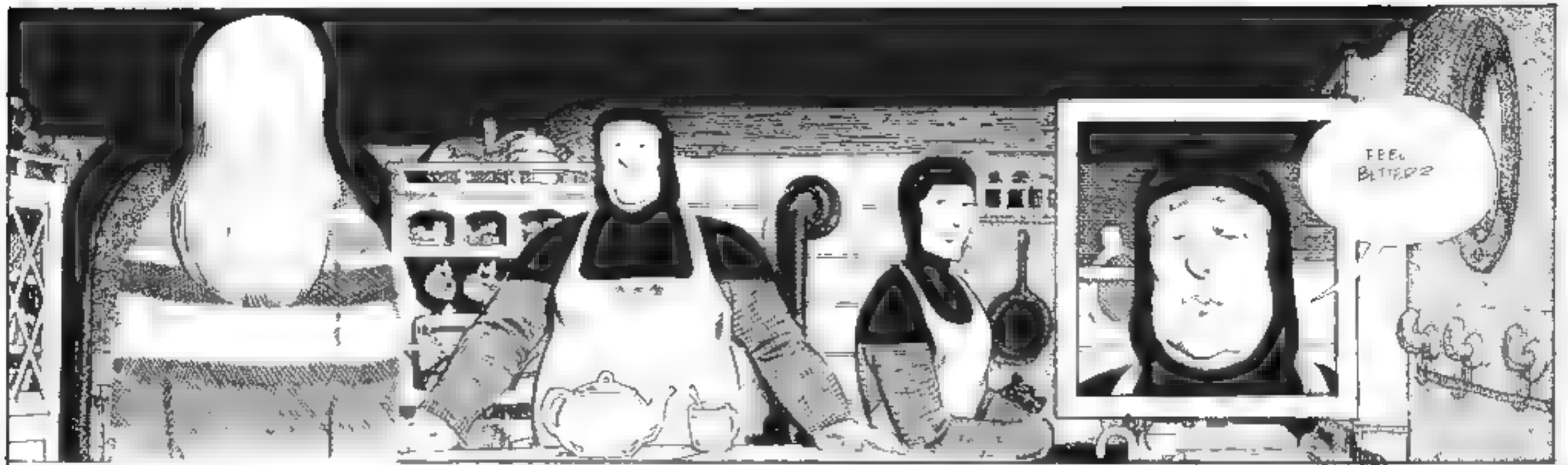




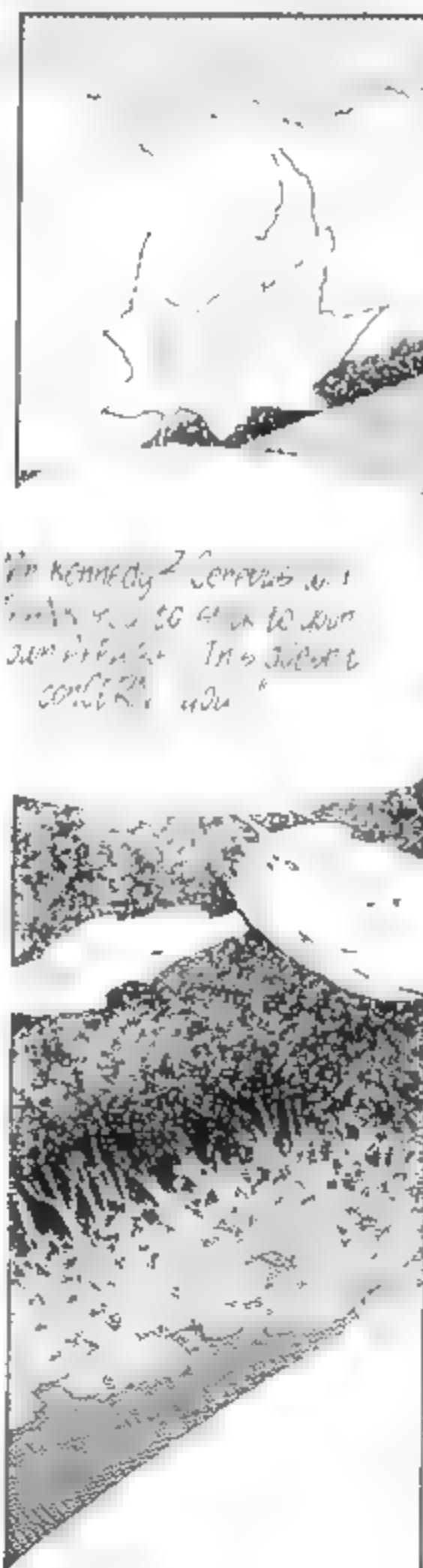






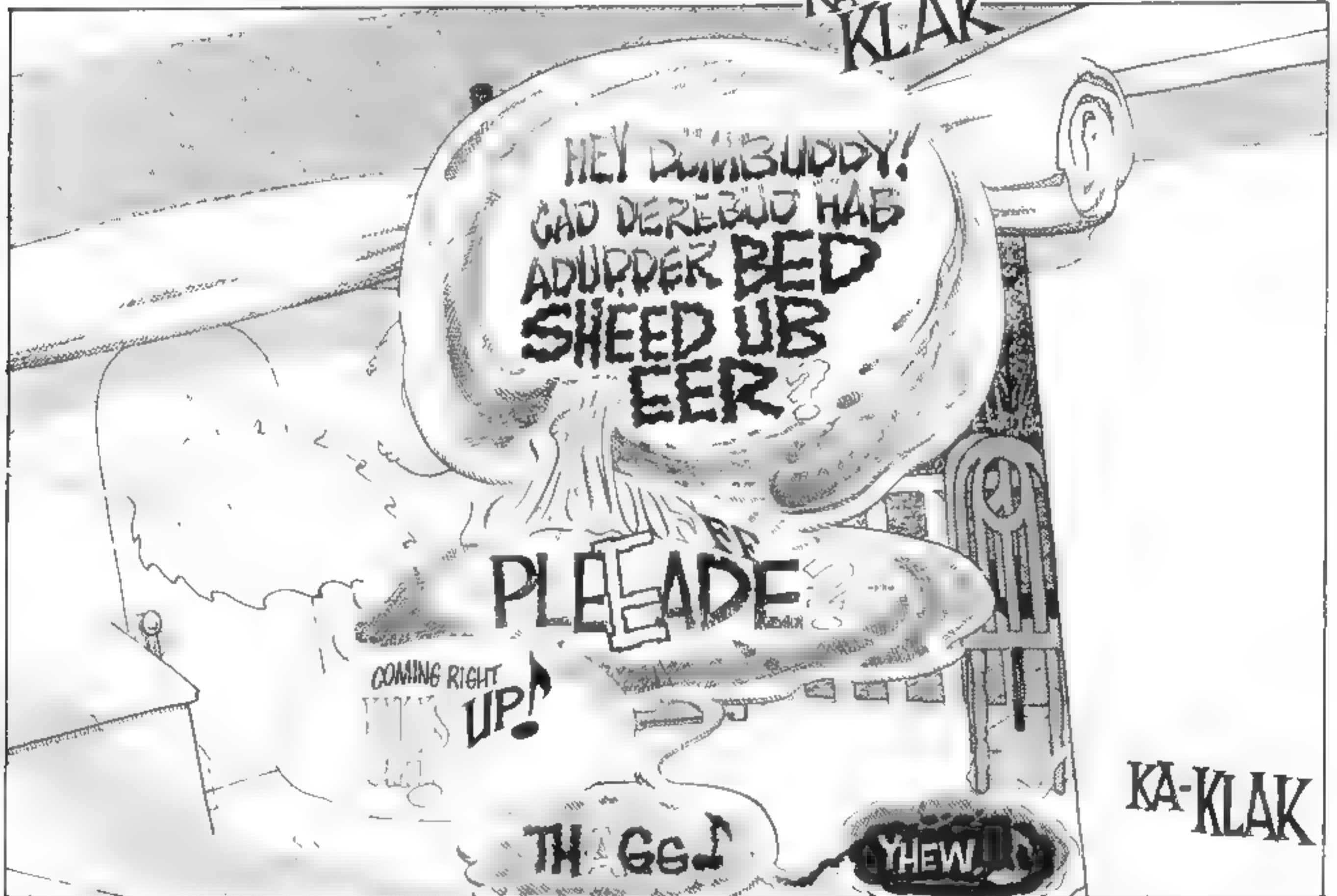
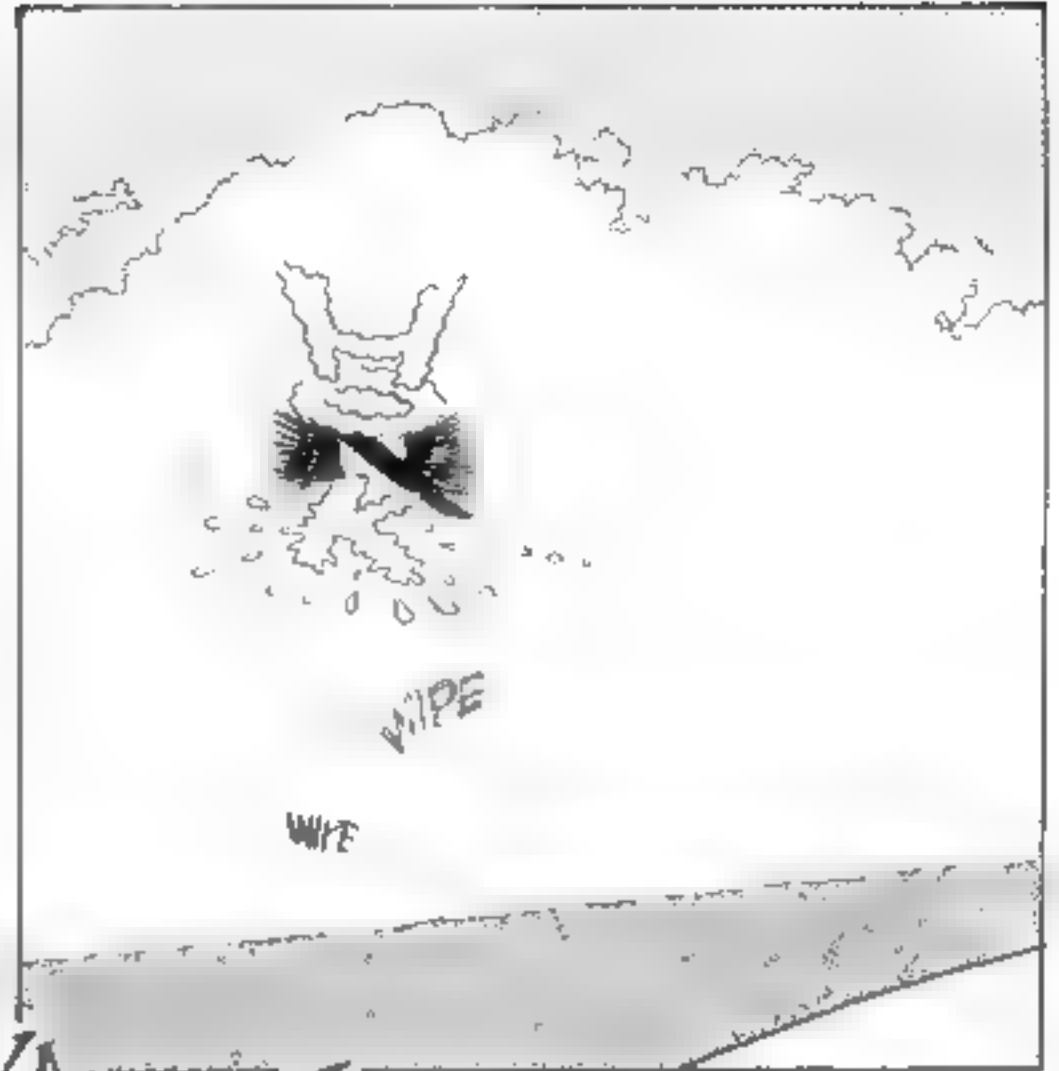
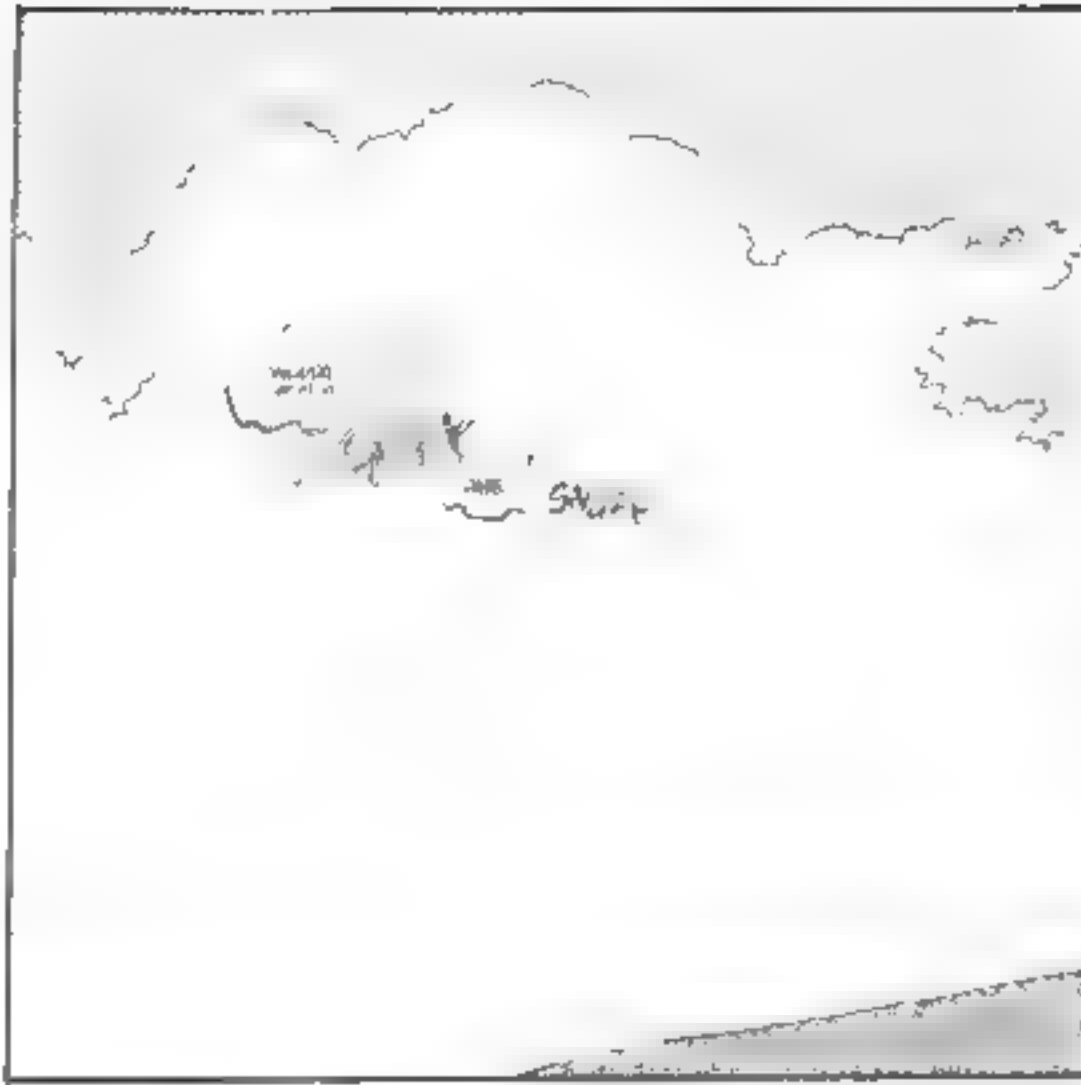












GO!

**WILLY**

# TELL

**WITH**

**TELL**  
THE TRUTH

31

to "cut" the "chain"  
 length to the next segment  
 that lies in

CEREBUS WILL GO  
if I can't make it  
AND THAT'S THE WAY IT IS  
AND THAT'S THE WAY IT IS

AND THEN EVERYONE  
WILL CATCH THE FIRST  
BOAT SOUTH IN THE  
SPRING..

... AND MEET YOU IN  
MEALS BEFORE THE  
FESTIVAL OF SUMMER  
BONFIRE

CERE BUK. CAN'T  
LIVE WITHOUT YOU,  
JAKA

Yon.  
K. J. M.  
T. M. T.

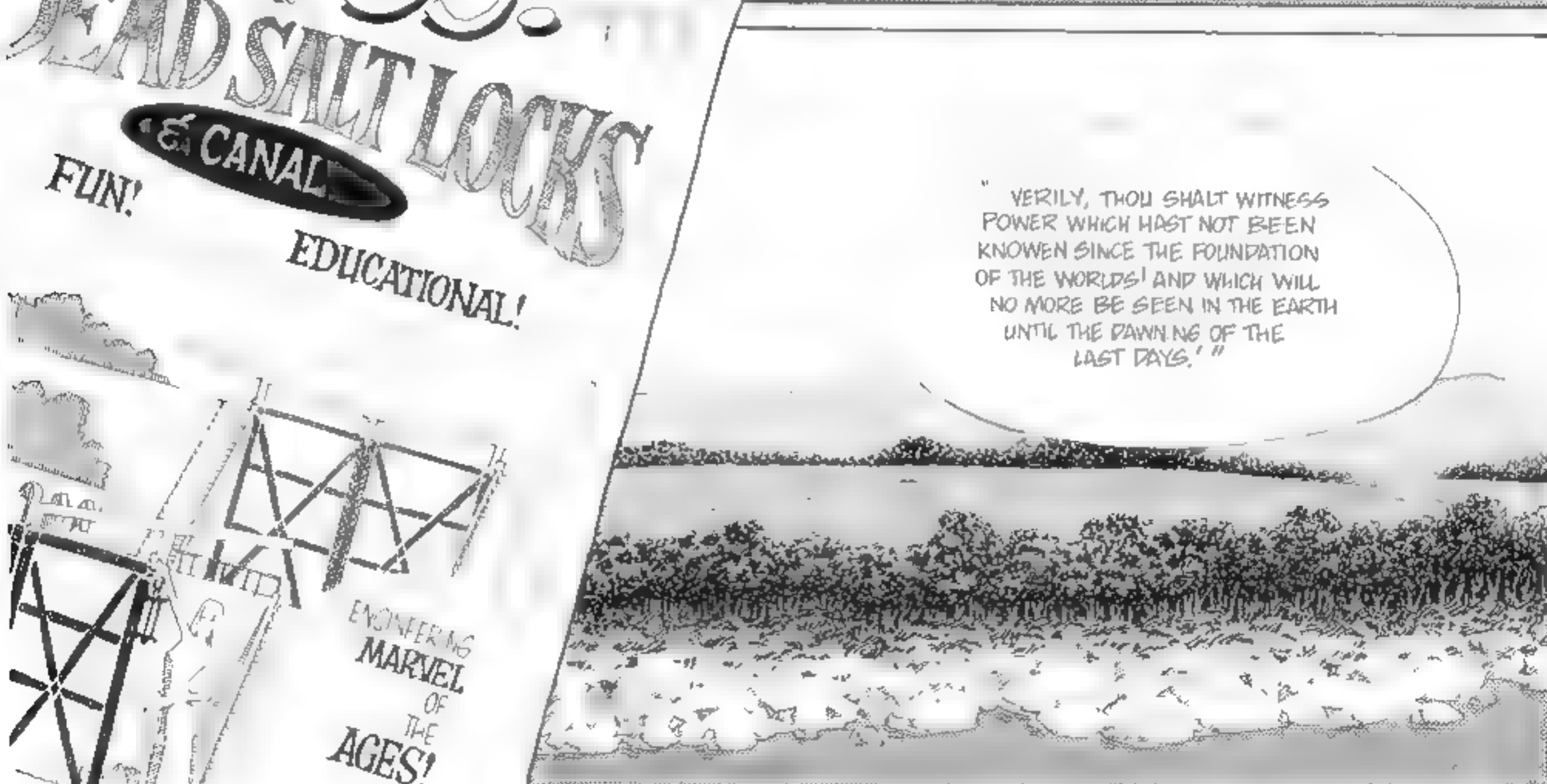


Sketch  
Sketch  
Sketch

Drifting  
towards some  
ignoble destiny  
they could not  
evade.

Sketch  
Sketch  
Sketch -  
Sketch

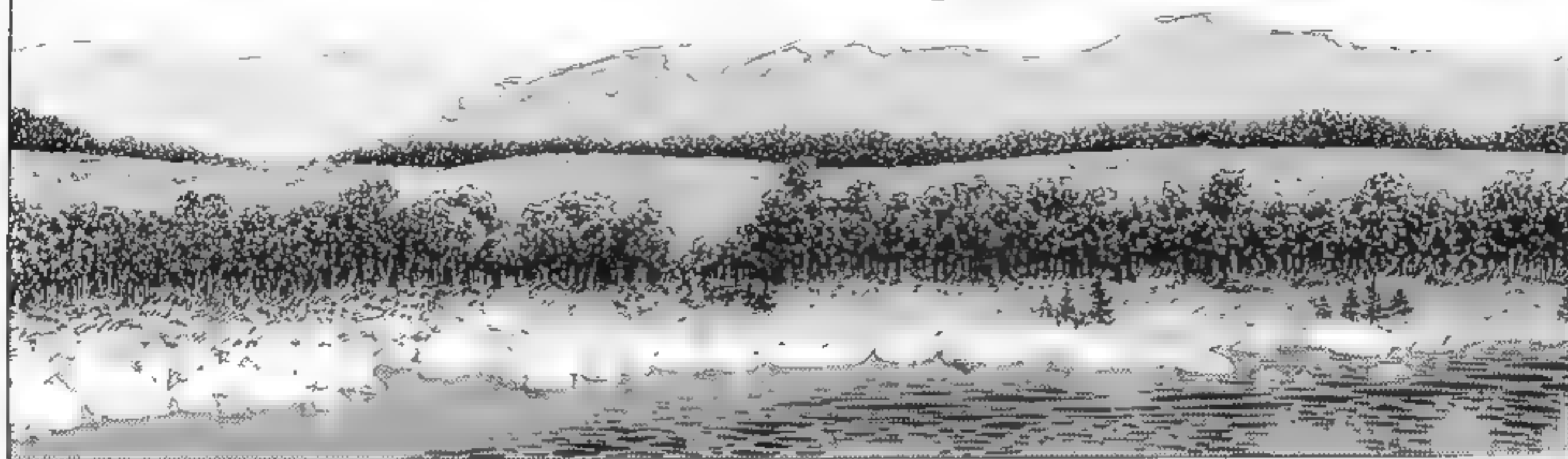
If you're  
strong enough  
there *are* no  
precedents.





"AND THEN BEGAN THERE TO  
RAIN FROM OUT OF THE HEAVENS  
FIRE AND BRIMSTONE AND A  
DEVOURING WIND WHICH  
BREAKETH IN PIECES THE  
CHURCH OF MEN..."

"BURNING  
HIS HIGH  
GATES..."



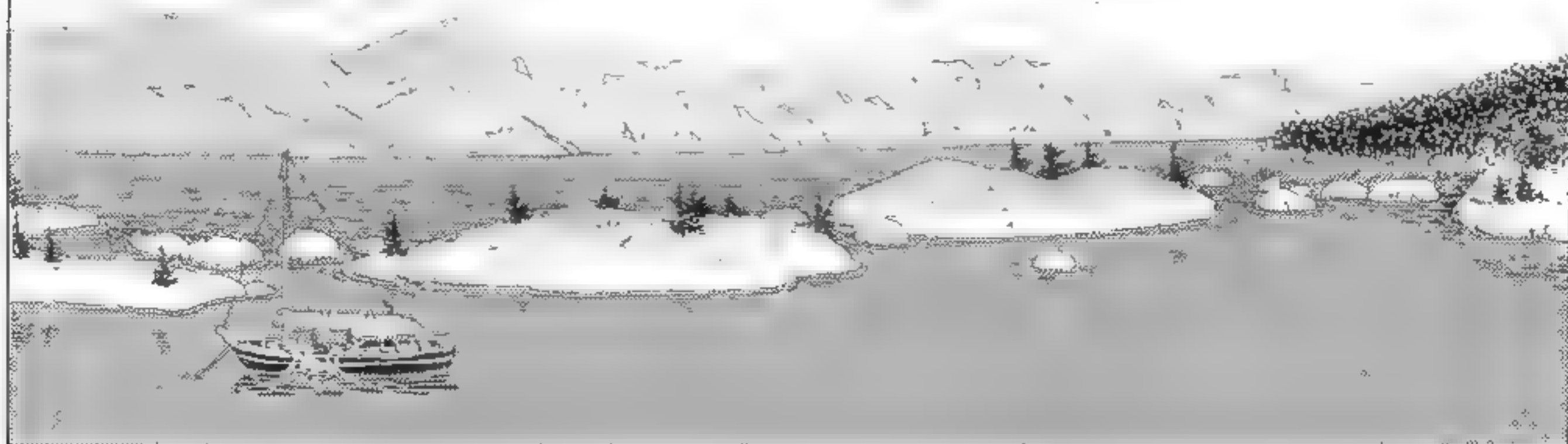
"...AND CARRYING HIS  
RAIMENT AND HIS ADORNMENTS  
DOWN TO SHEOL..."

"...AND CIRIN TREMBLED  
UPON THE THRONE OF MEN  
WHICH WAS UNTOUCHED BY  
THE FIRE AND THE BRIMSTONE  
AND THE DEVOURING WIND  
'ROUND ABOUT..."



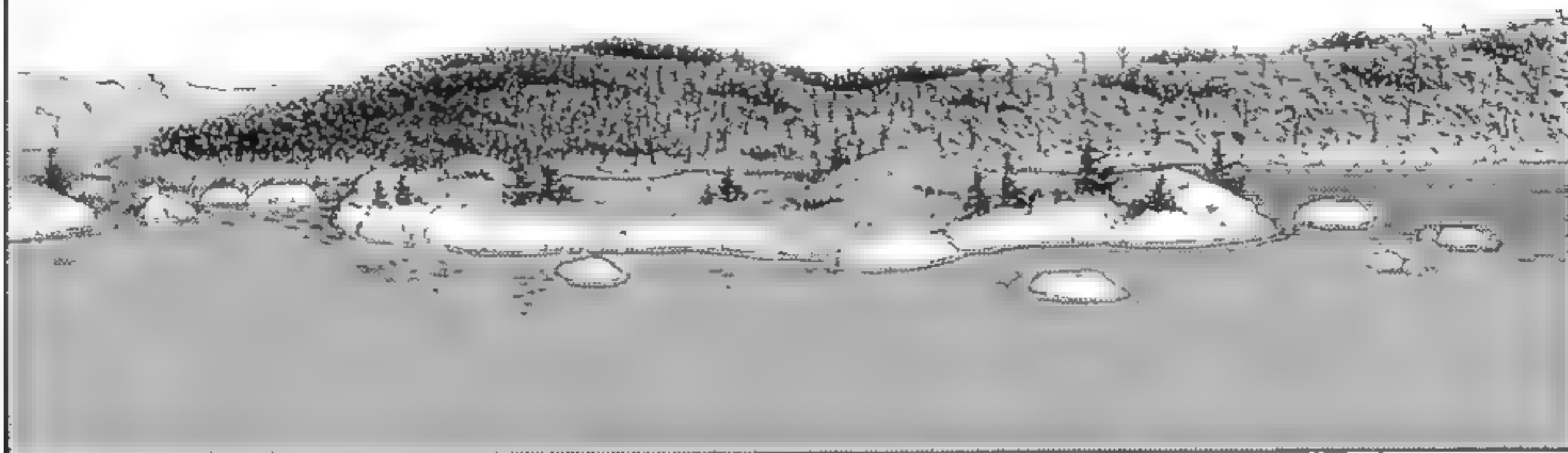
"...AND STILL THE MIGHTY  
ARM OF OUR LADY WAS  
OUTSTRETCHED AND SHE  
SPAKE UNTO CIRIN,  
SAYING..."

"DESIREST THOU TO BE  
RAISED UP? THAT THOU  
MIGHT RECEVE PRAISES  
ABOVE ALL OTHER  
WOMEN?"



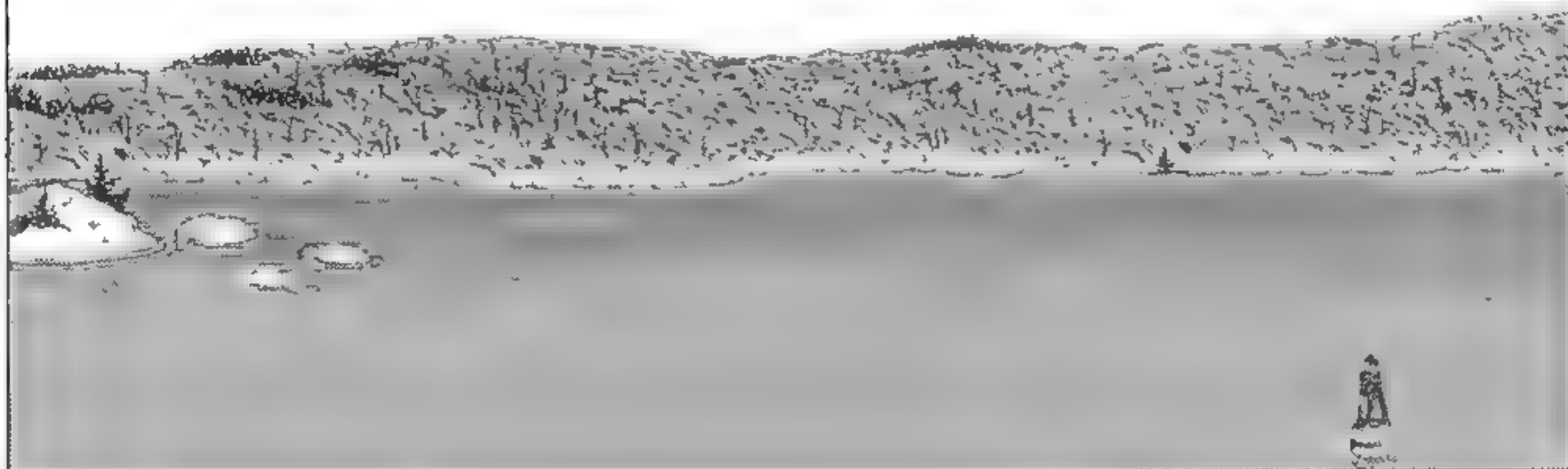
"VERILY THOU SHALT BE  
RAISED UP THAT THOU  
MAYEST SEE THAT  
WHICH NO MOTHER HATH  
BEEN FOR."  
"YEA."

"AND WHICH NO MOTHER  
SHALL SEE AGAIN, NAY, NOT  
UNTIL THE DAWNING OF THE  
LAST DAYS."



"AND UPON THE THRONE OF  
MEN WAS CIRIN RAISED UP  
UNTO THE HEAVENS, YEA,  
UNTO THE VERY BOSOM  
OF OUR LADY..."

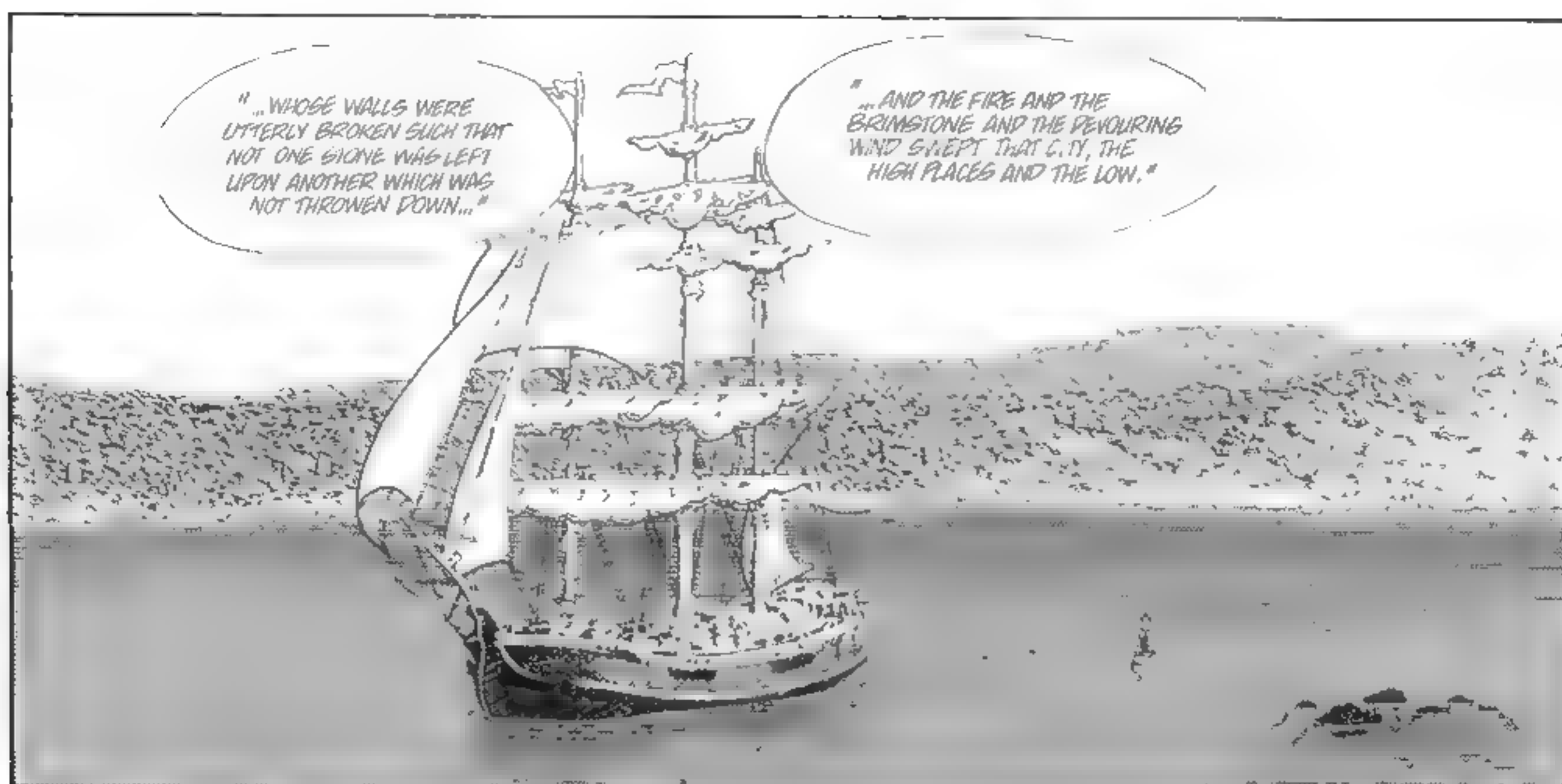
"WHOSE VOICE WAS LIKE  
A MIGHTY LUTE  
SPEAKING UNTO CHURCH  
AND CHURCHMEN"



"BEHOLD THE GREAT  
CITY WHICH HATH PLAYED  
THE HARLOT BEFORE  
ME!"

"AND CIRIN BEHELD AND  
TO THE FIRE AND THE  
BRIMSTONE AND THE JEERING  
AND WENT GONE OUT FROM  
"THE CHURCH OF MEN"







'AND STILL THE MIGHTY  
ARM OF OUR LADY WAS  
OUTSTRETCHED AND SHE  
SPAKE UNTO CIRIN.

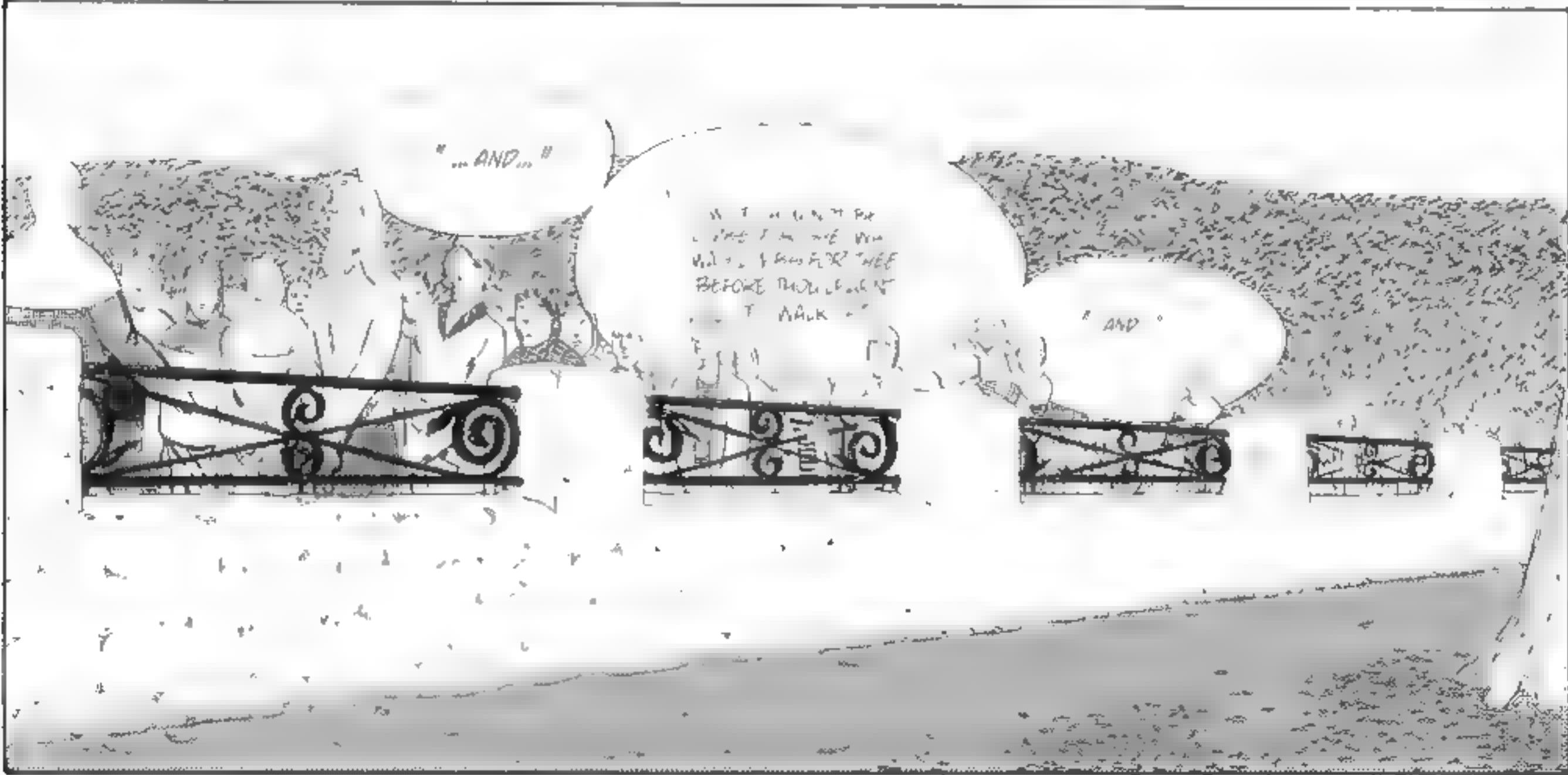
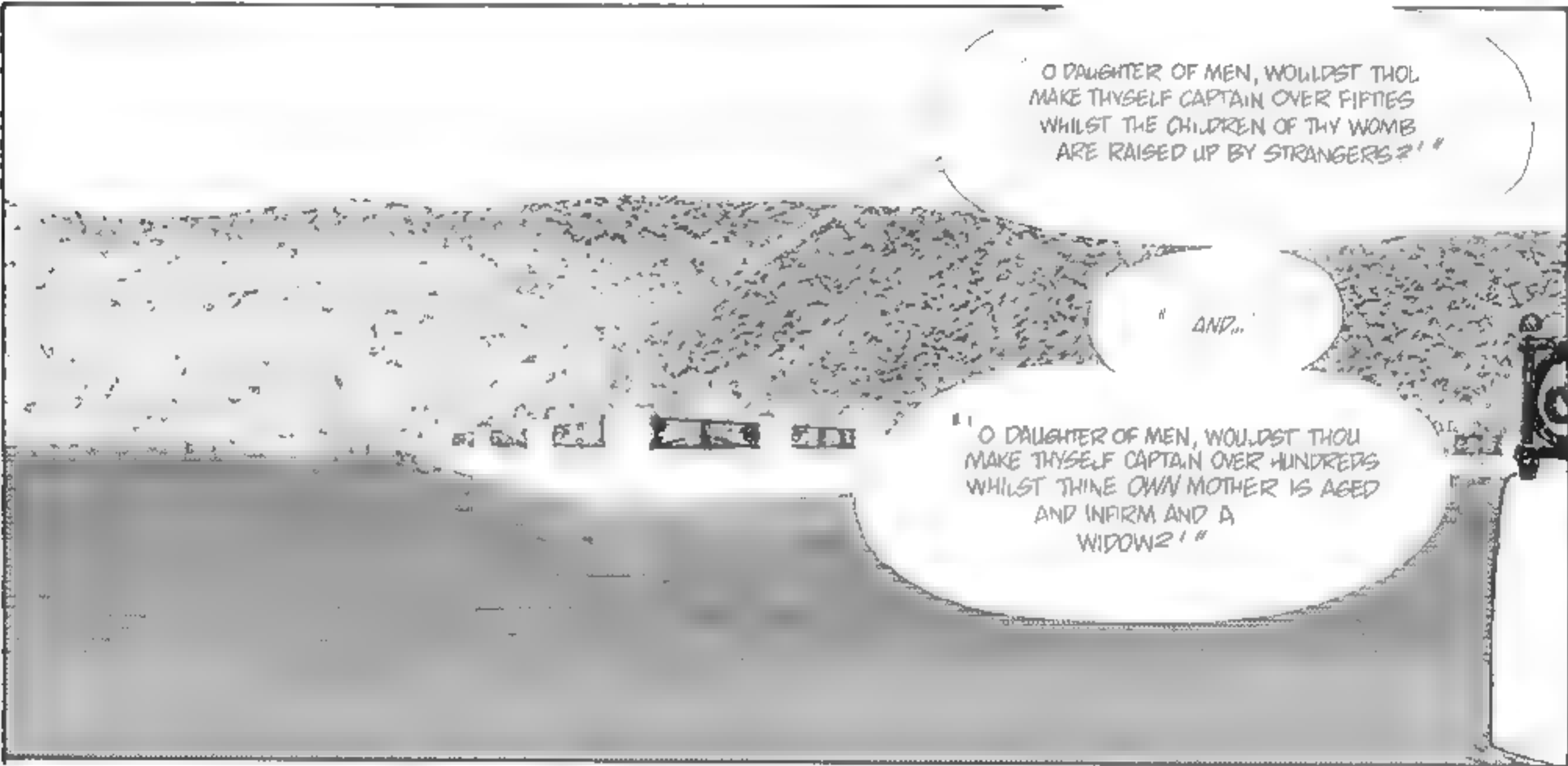
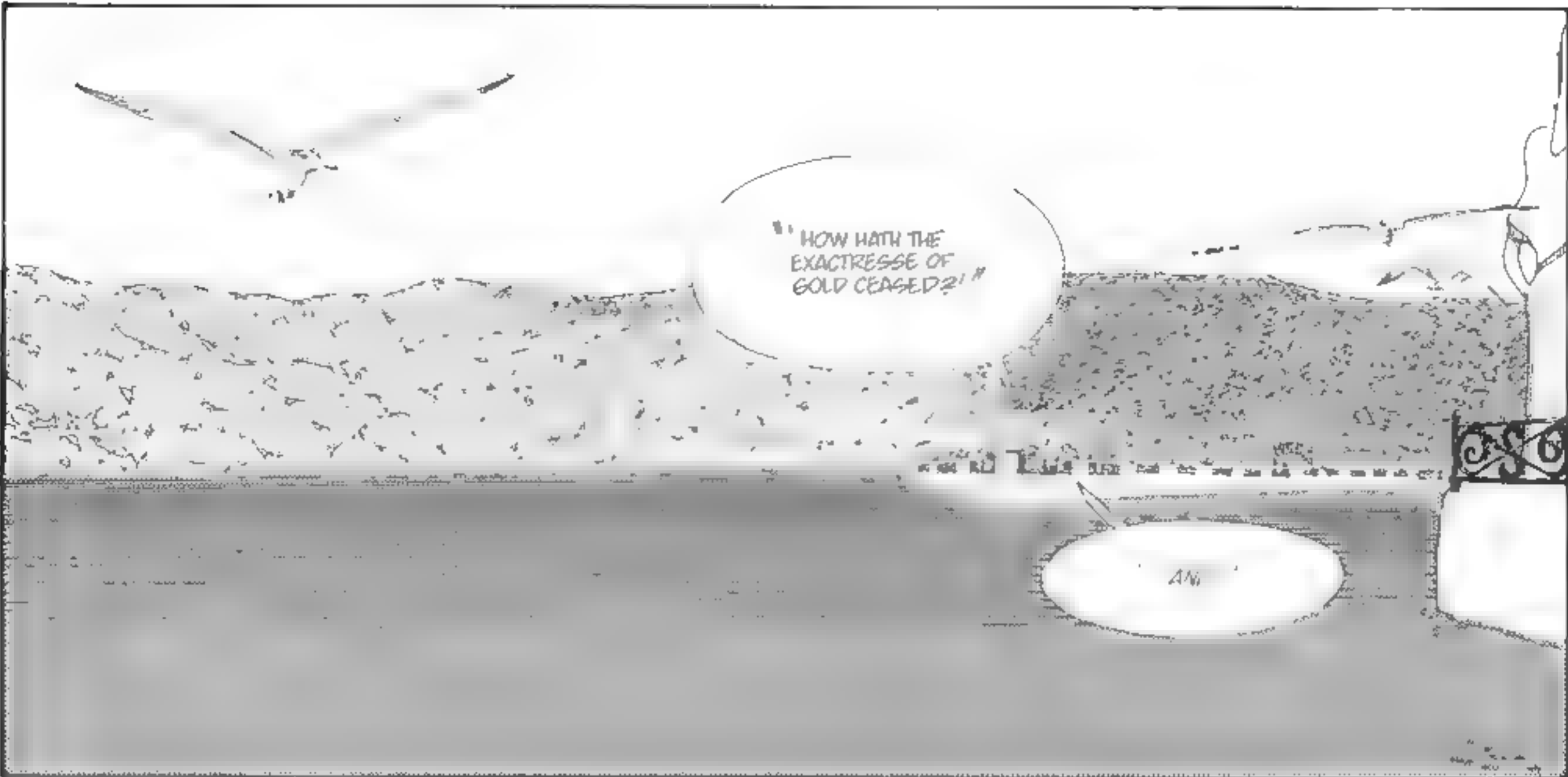
\*\*\*

WEEP NOT FOR THESE  
O DAUGHTER OF MEN, BUT  
WEEP RATHER FOR THYSELF."

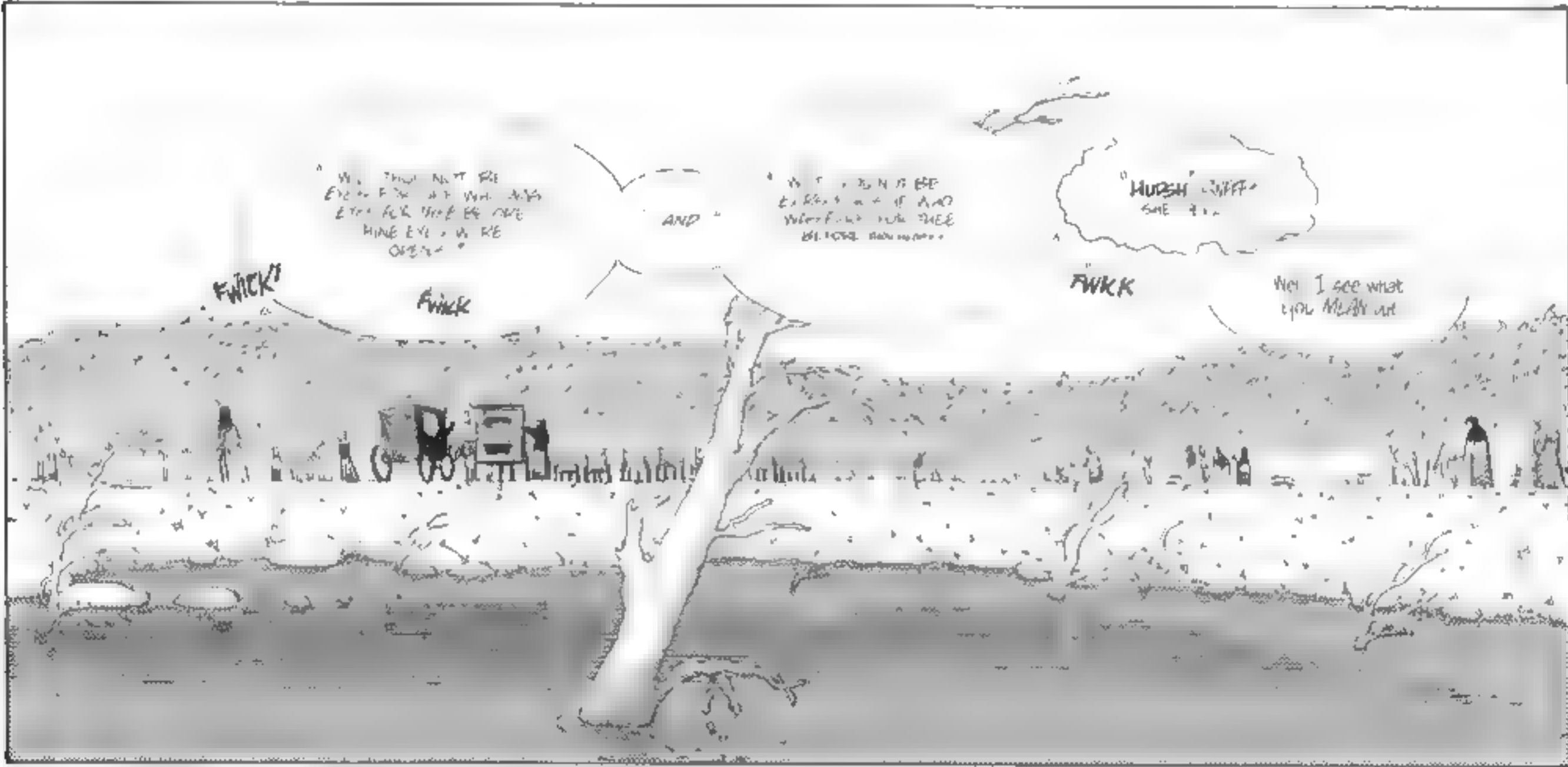
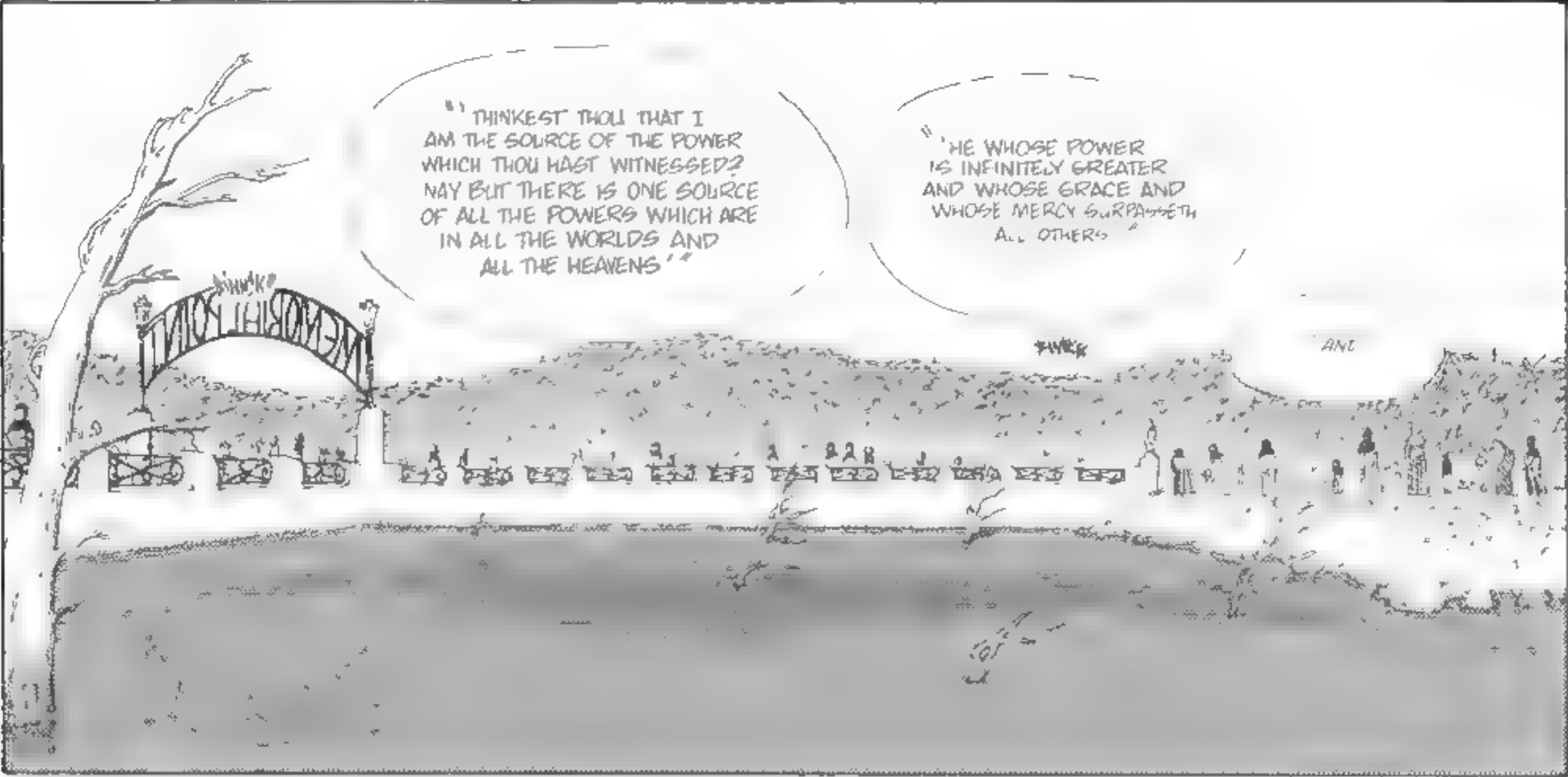
"FOR THE DAY IS  
COMING, AND NOW IS,  
WHEN ALL WHO HAVE  
SOWN THE WIND..."

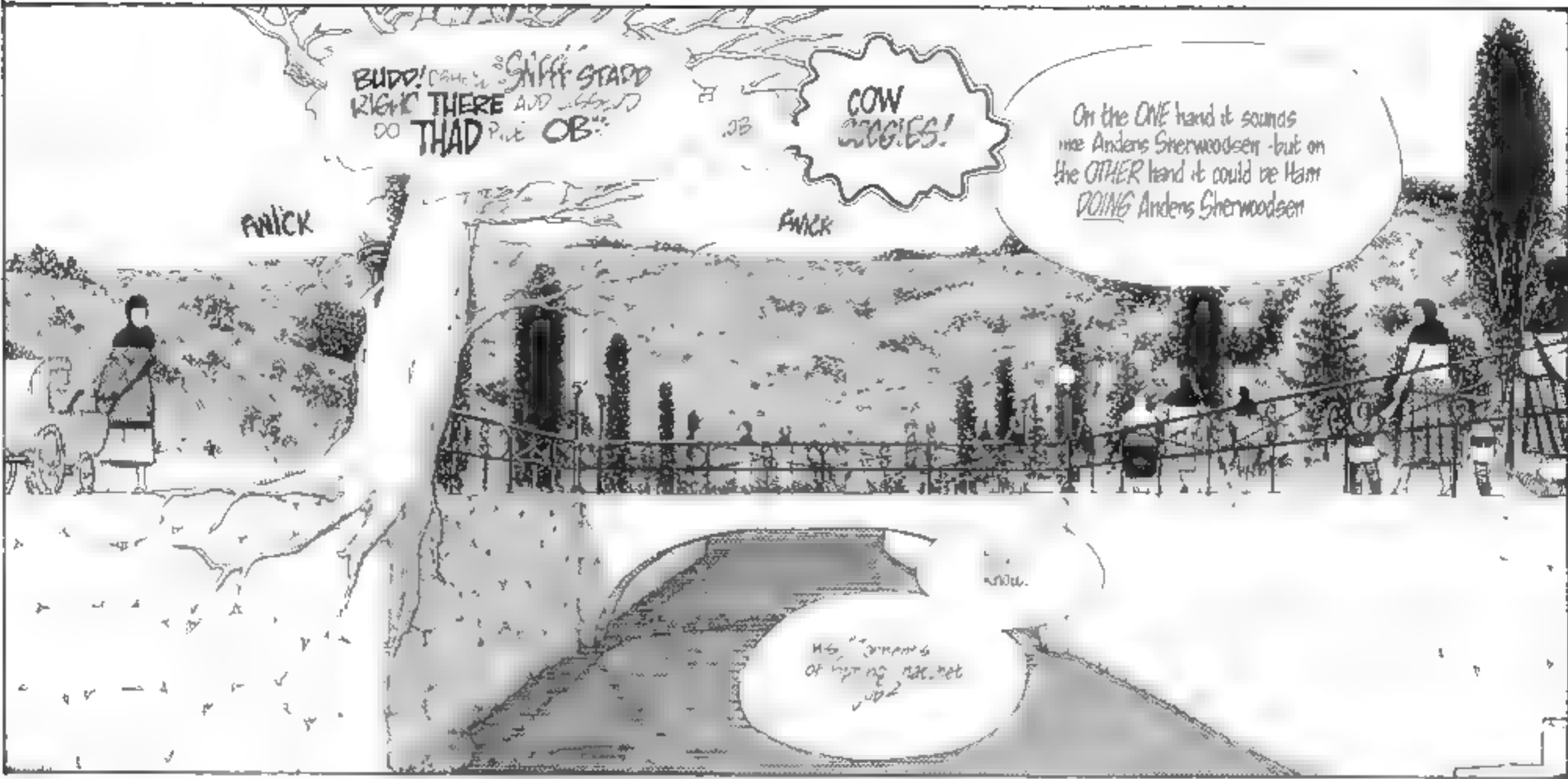
"I MUST REAP  
THE WHIRLWIND!"







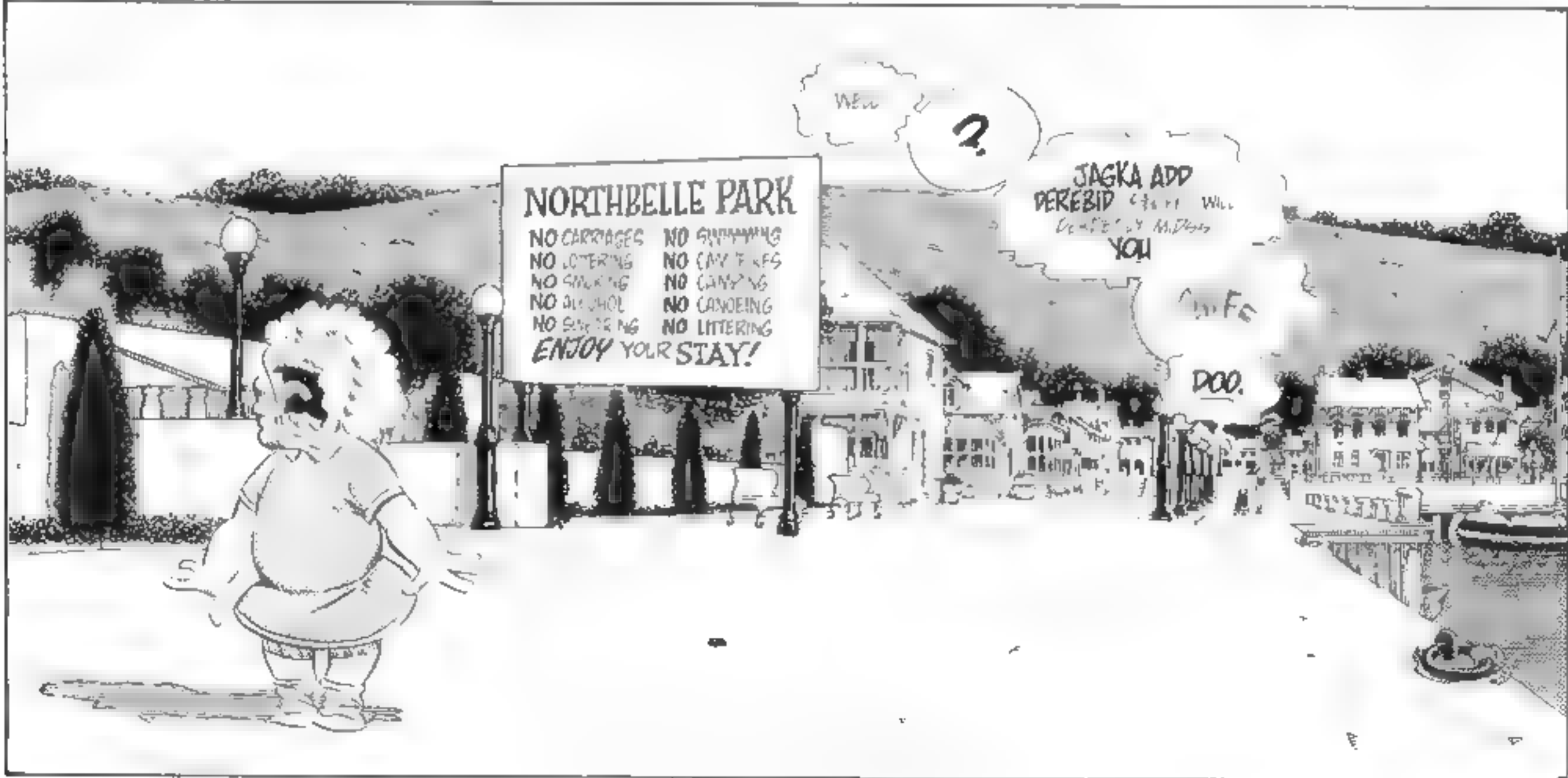
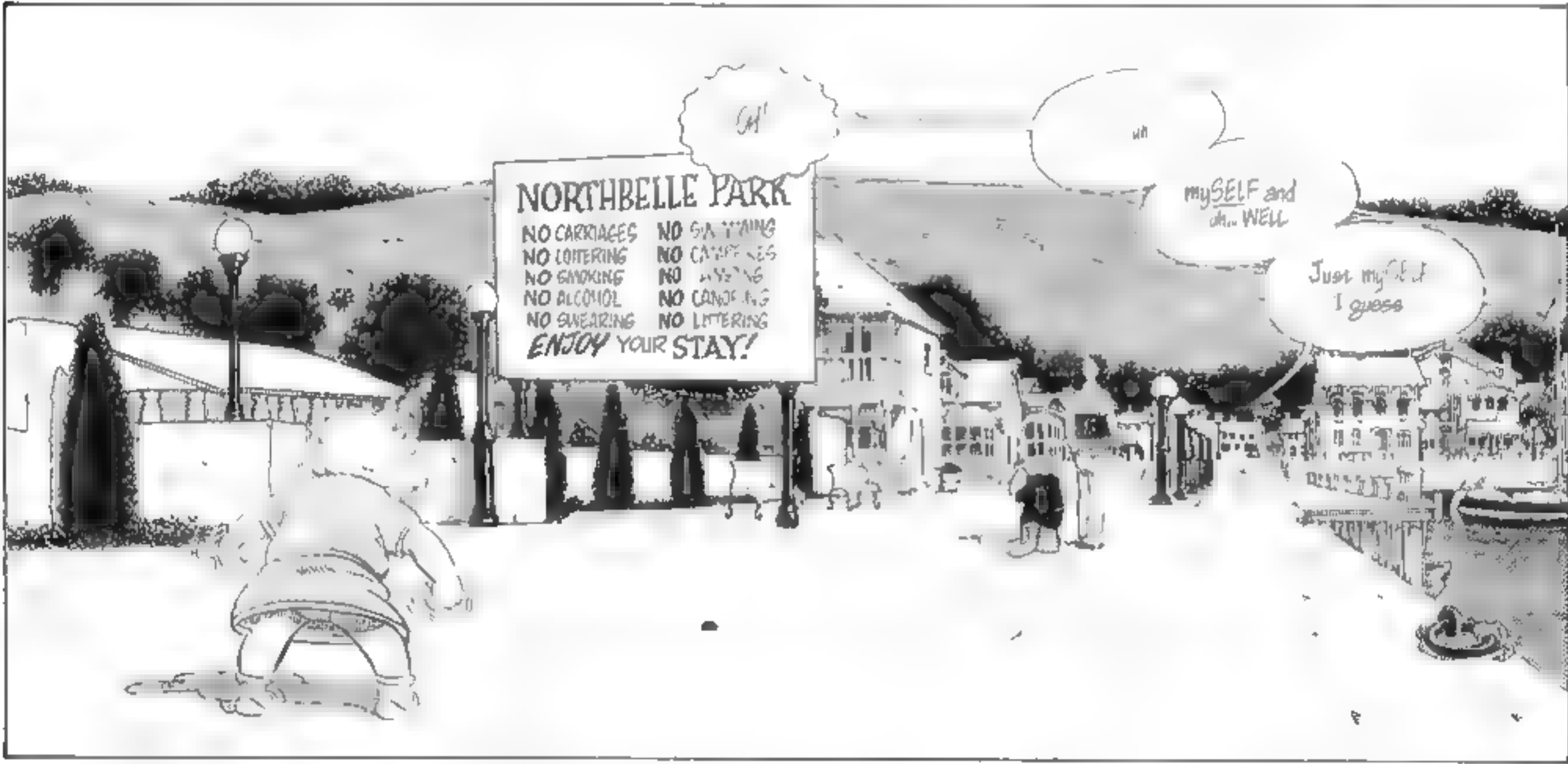
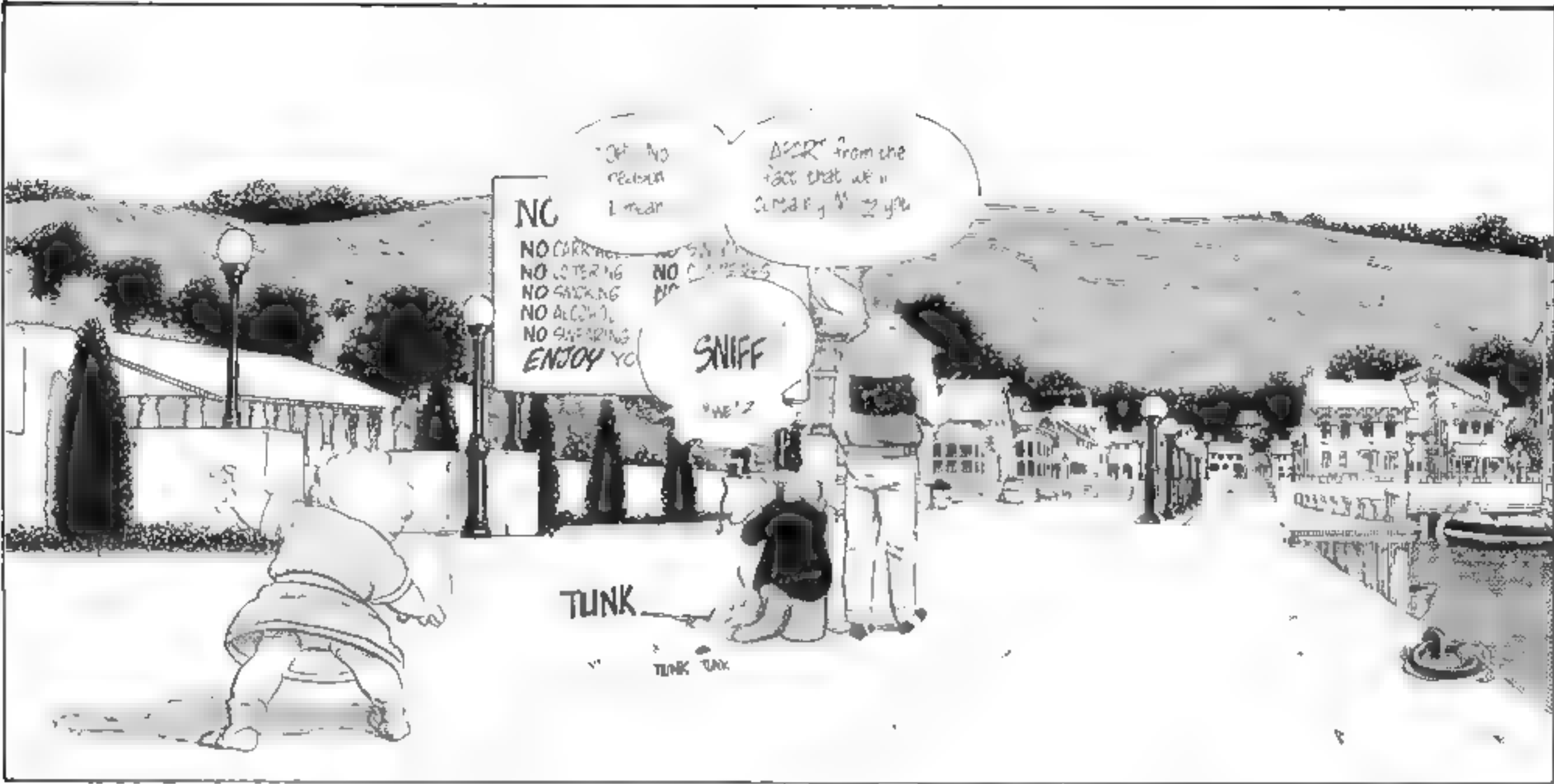




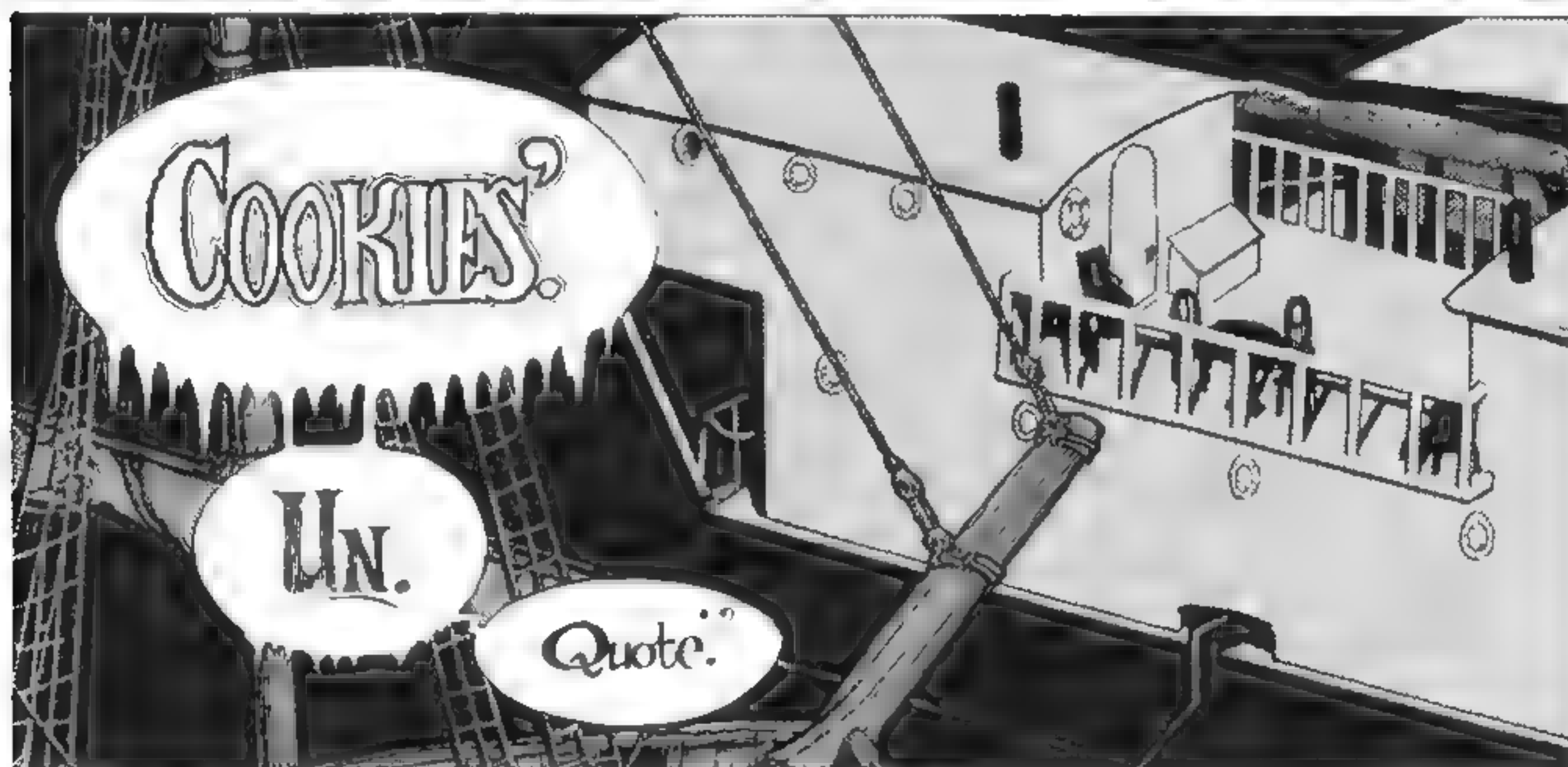
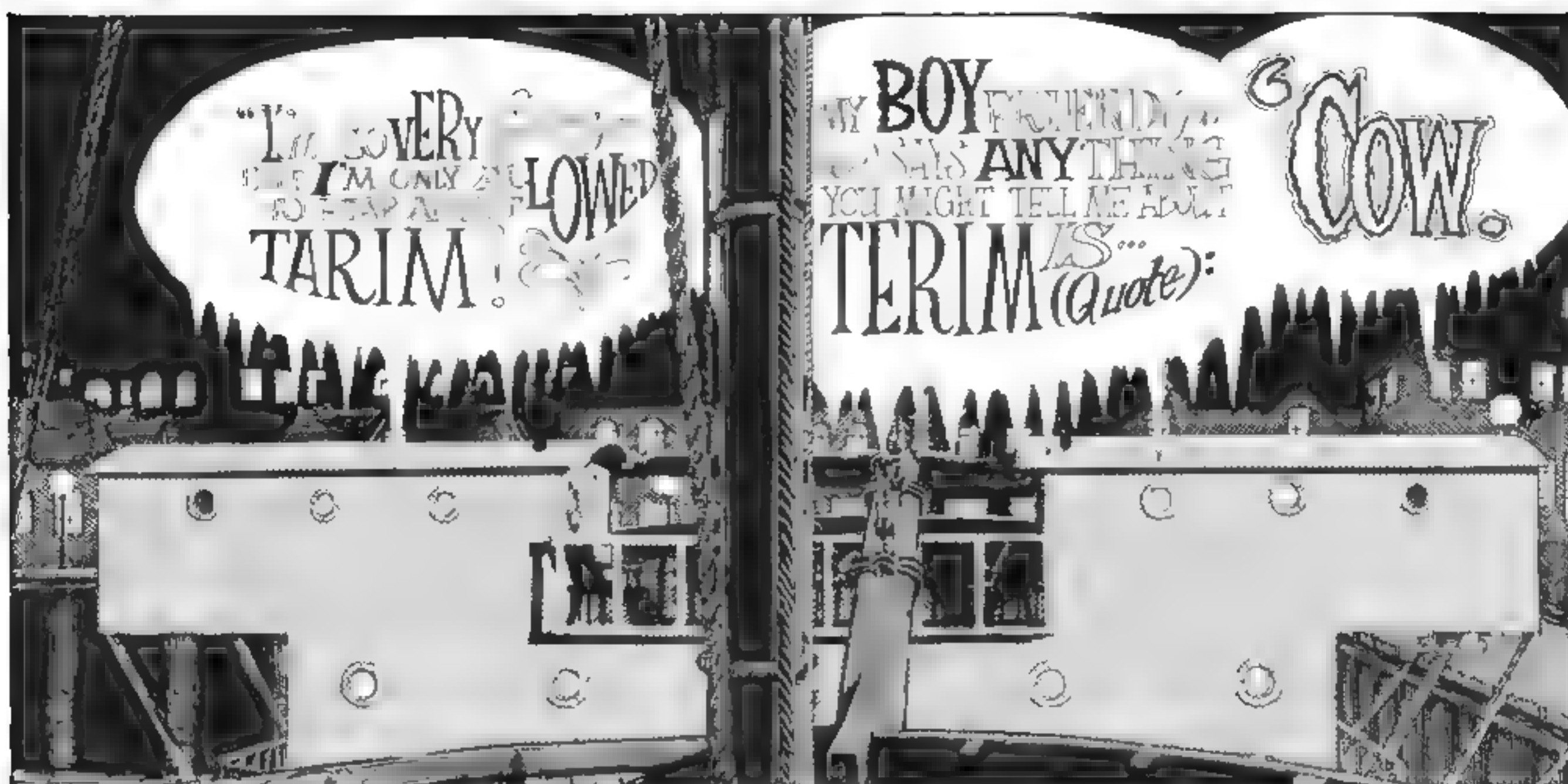






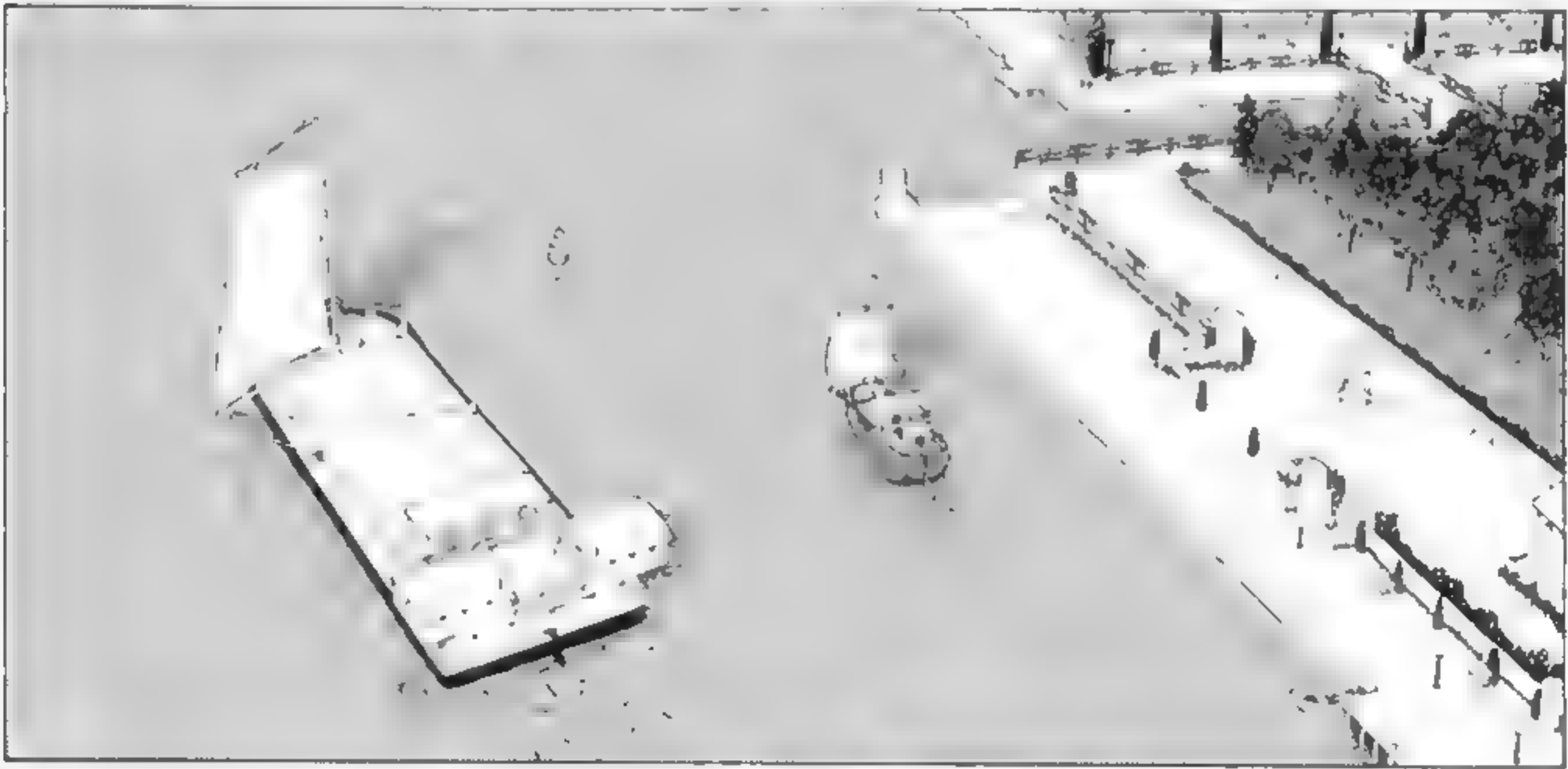
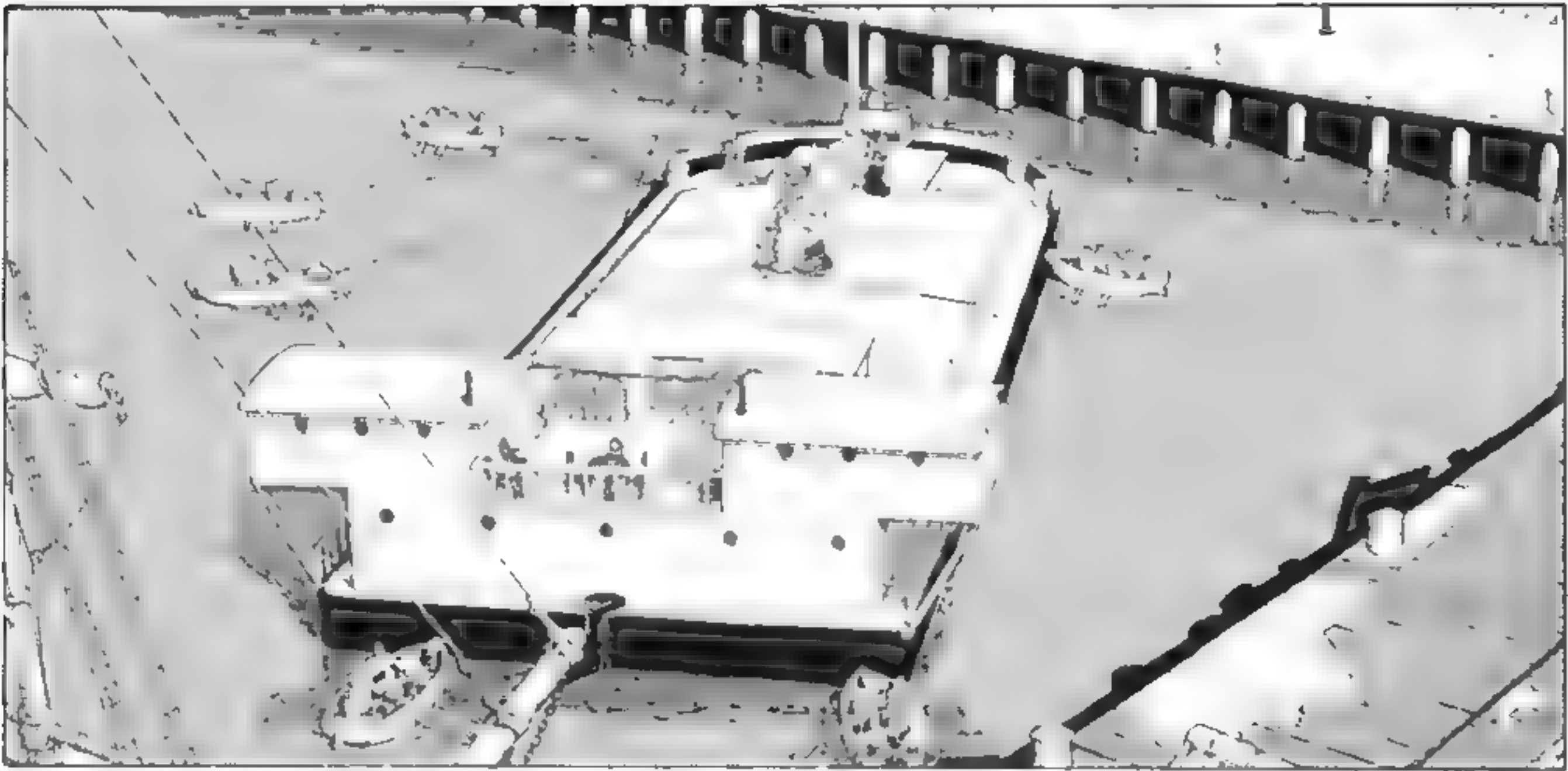


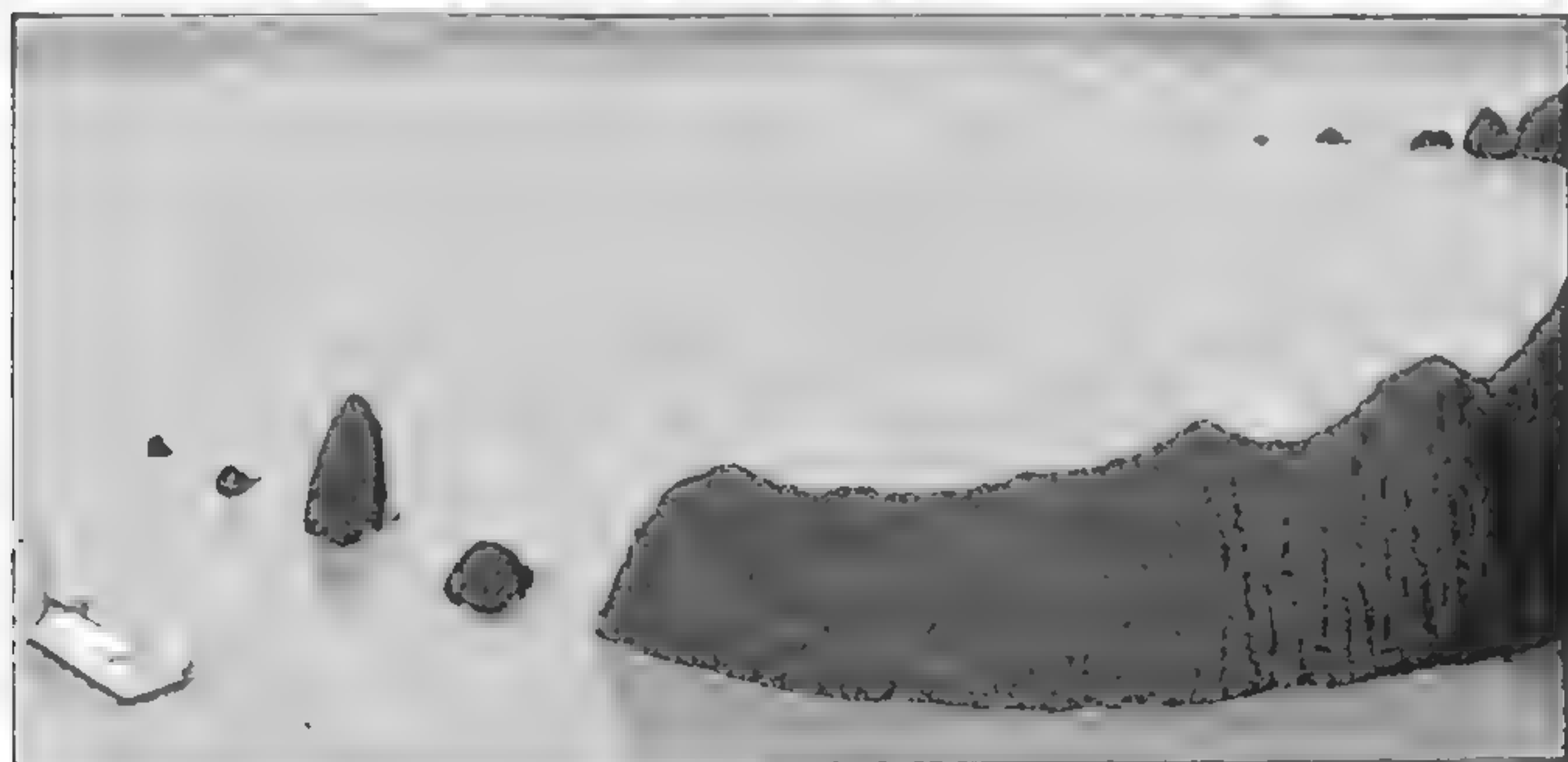




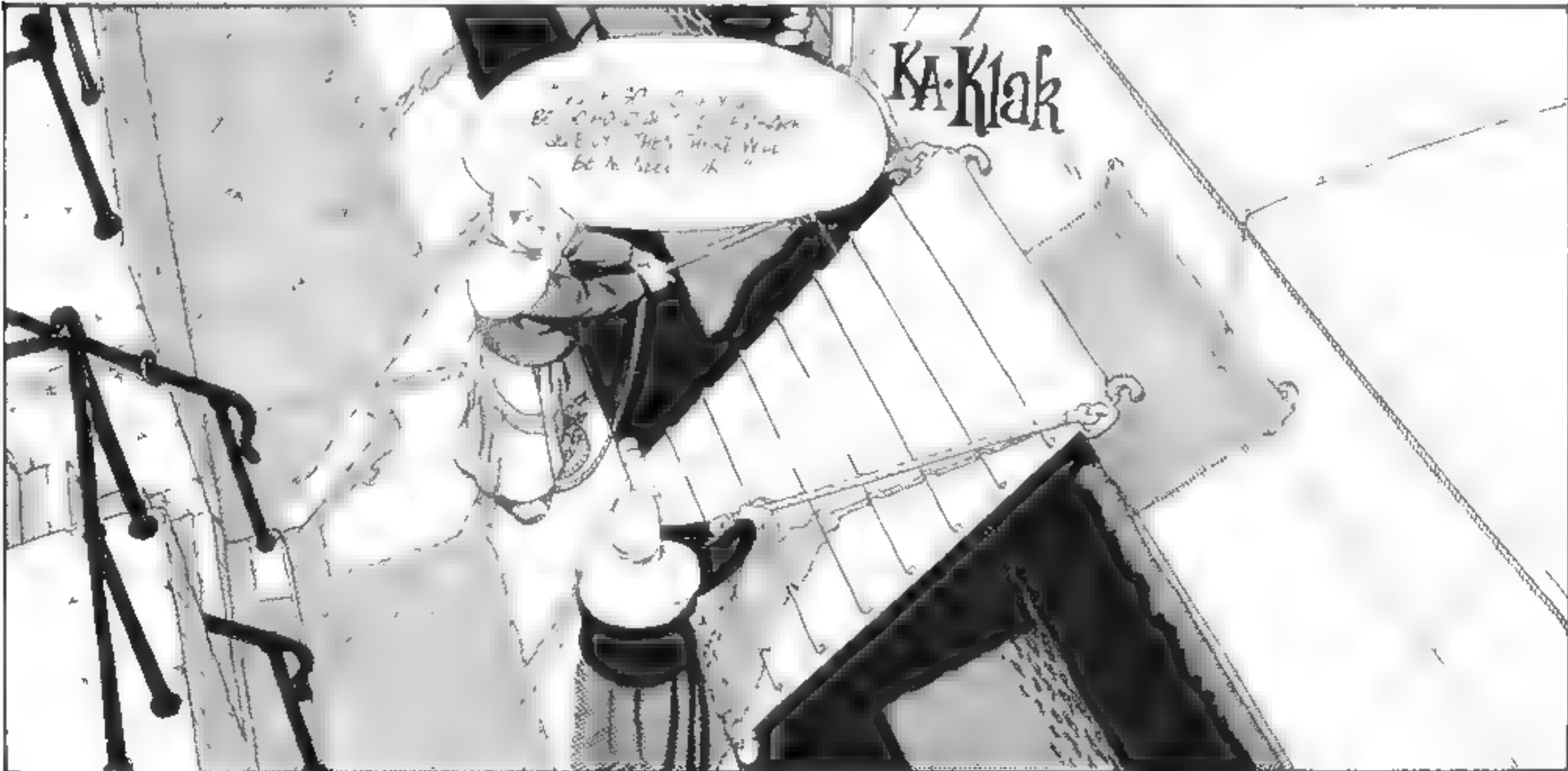
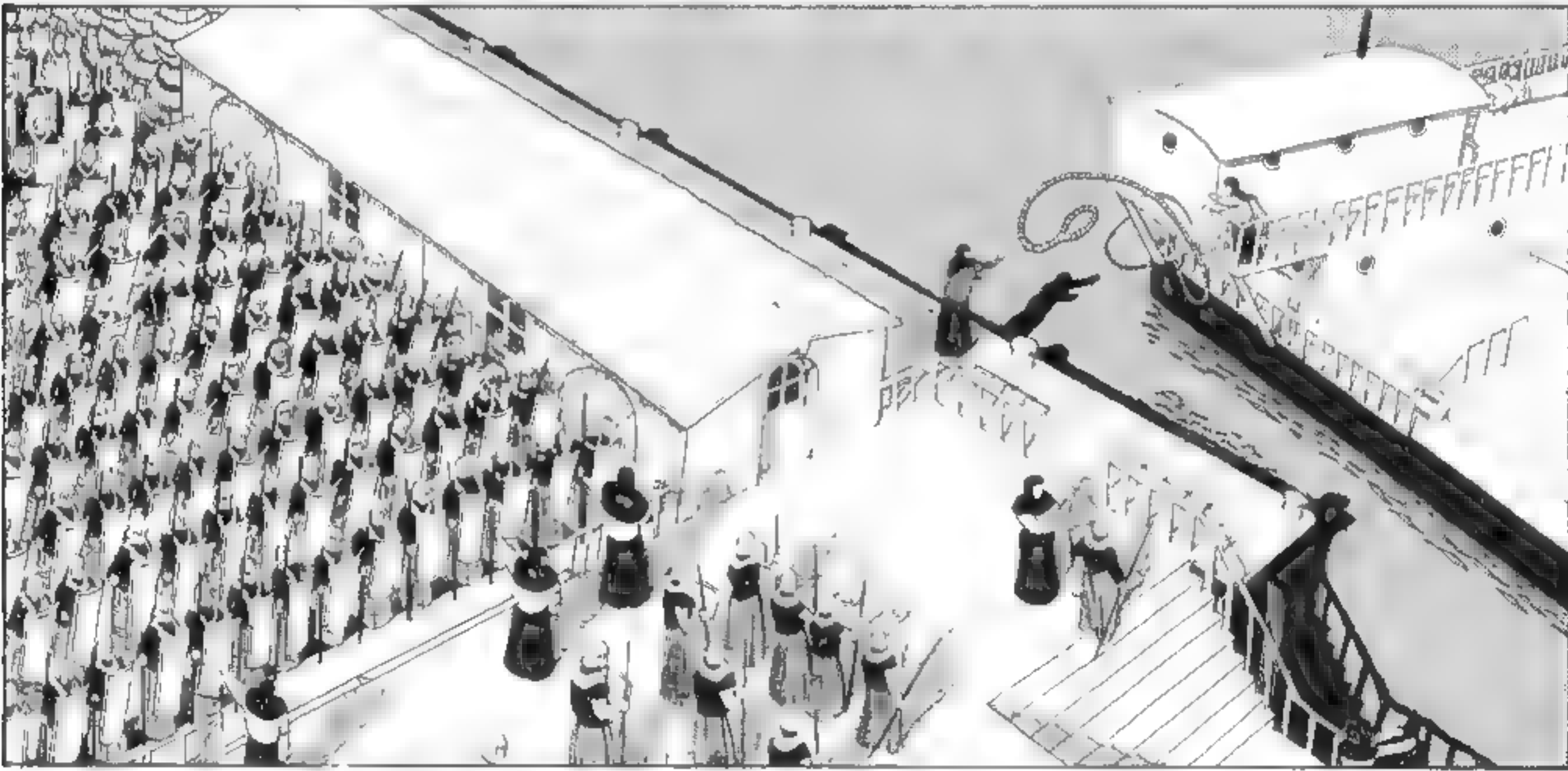






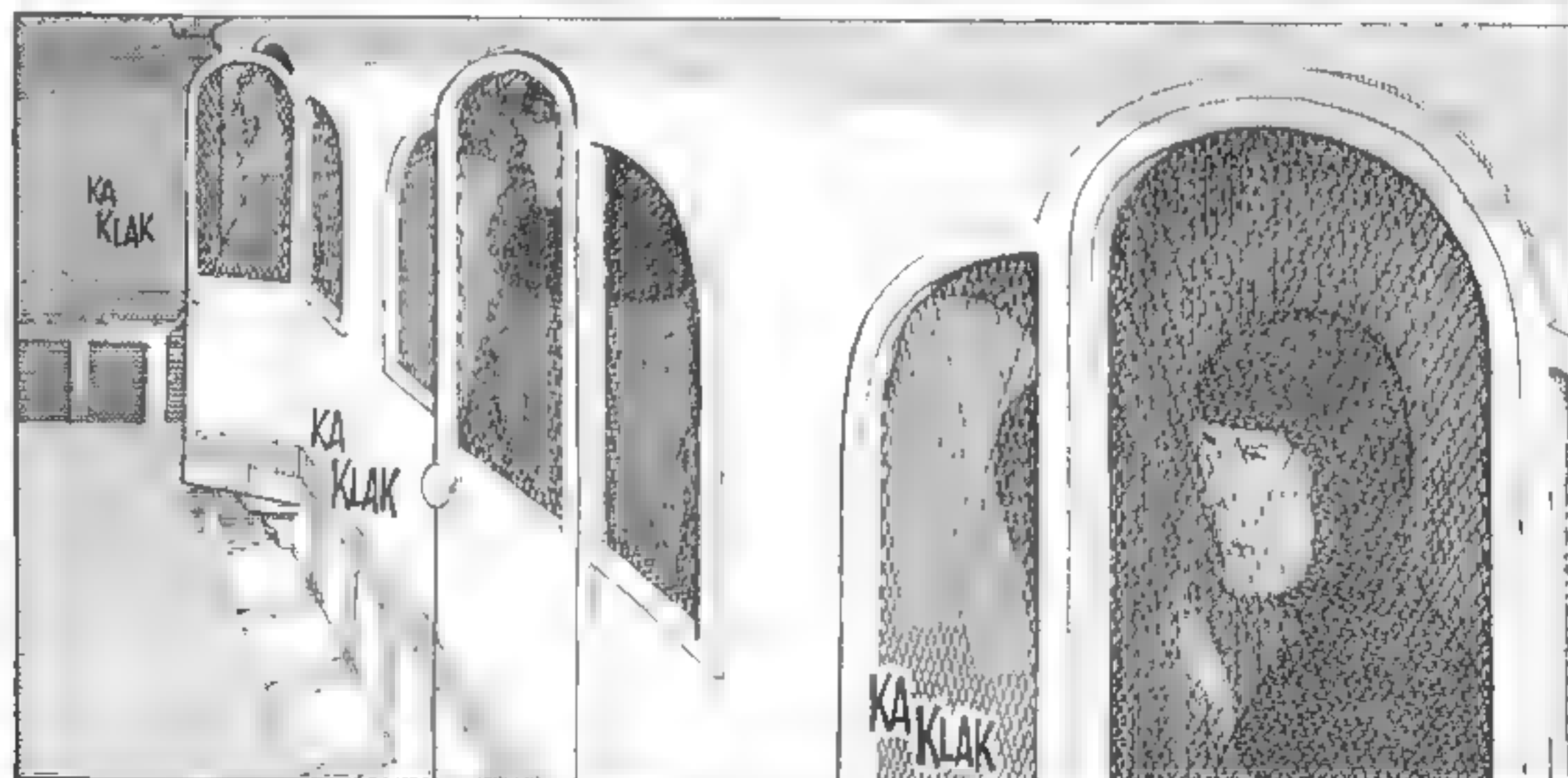
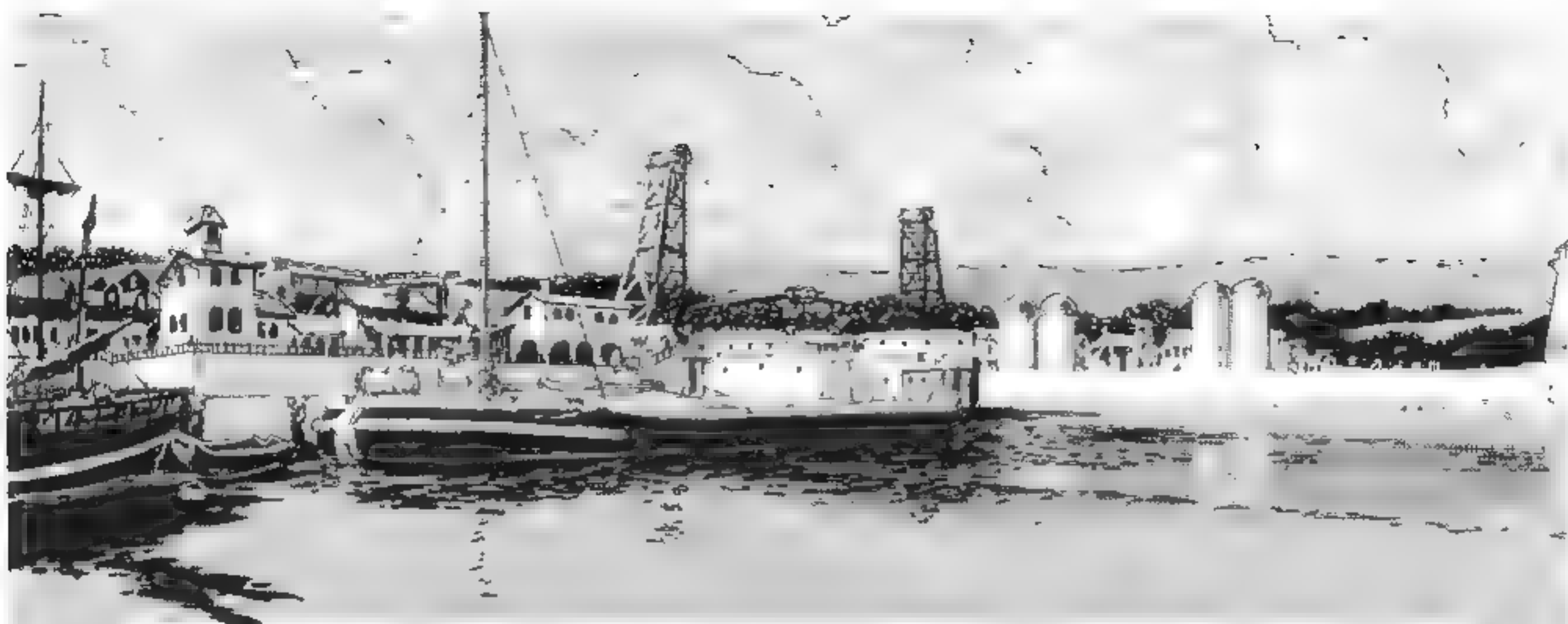






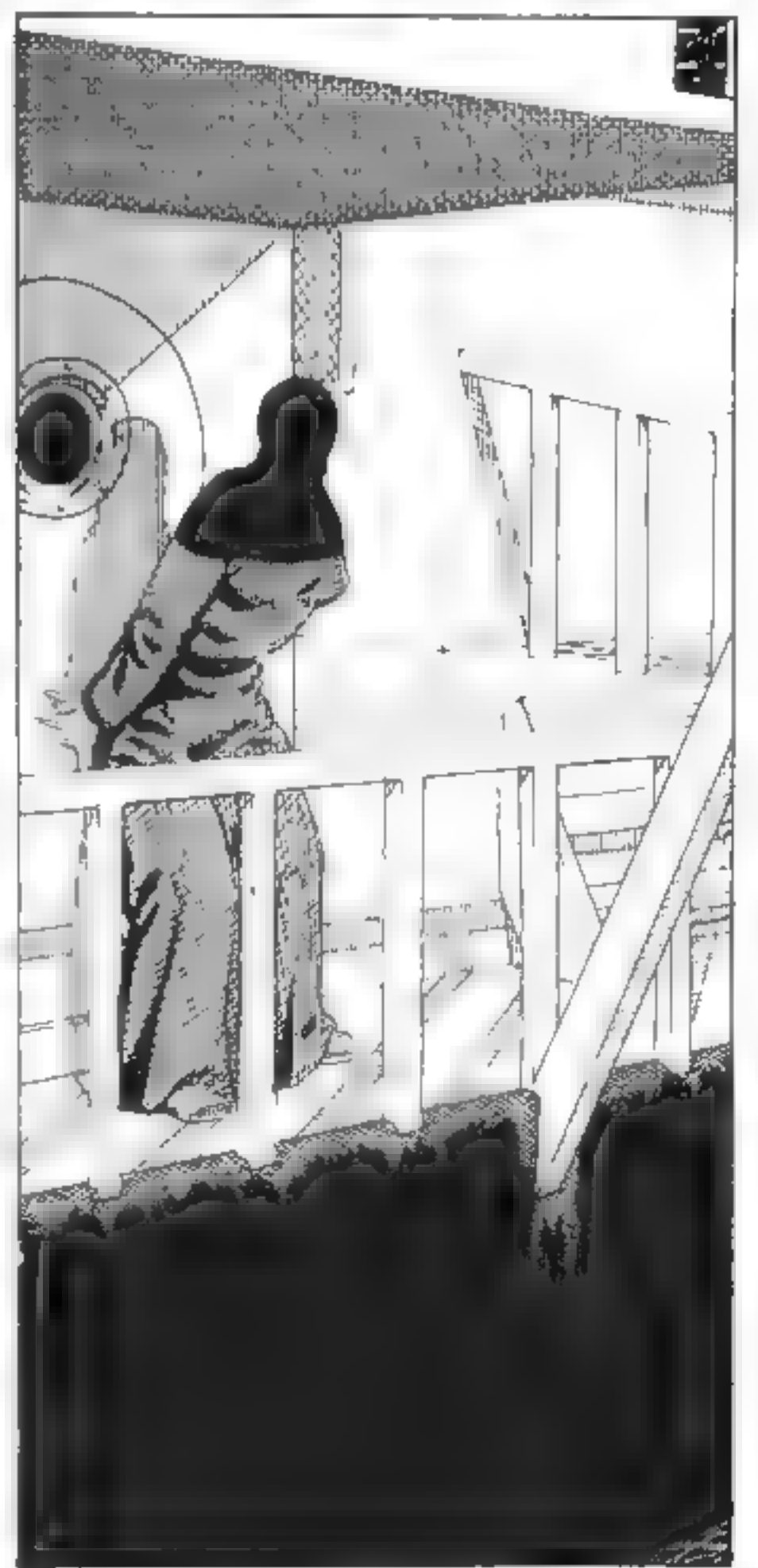
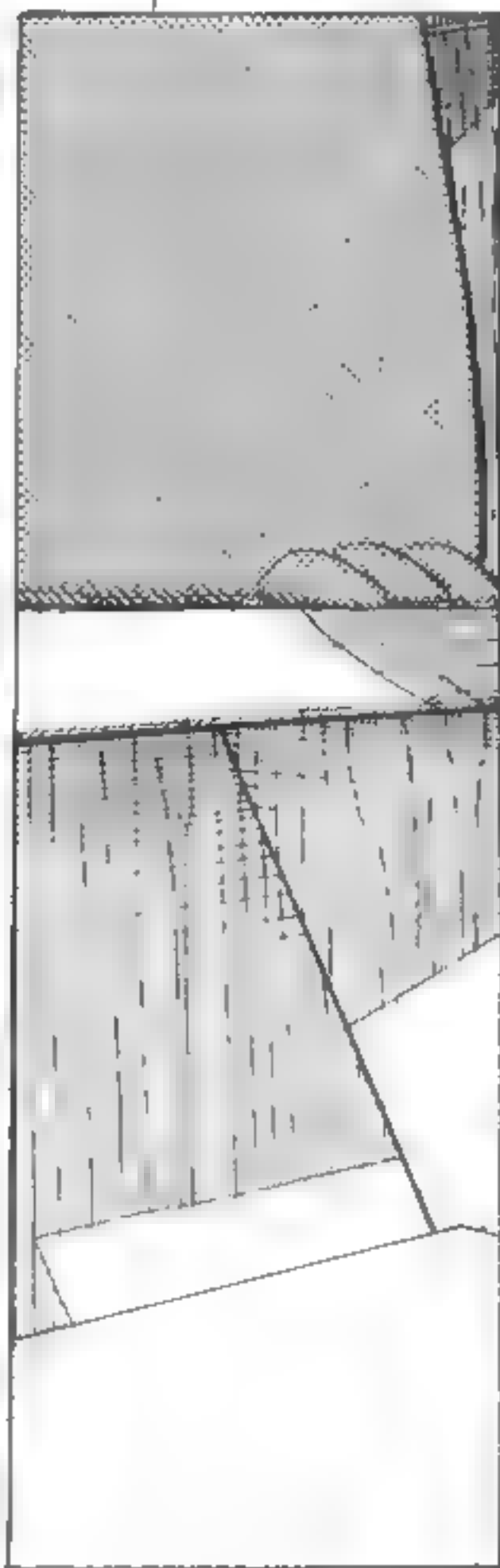
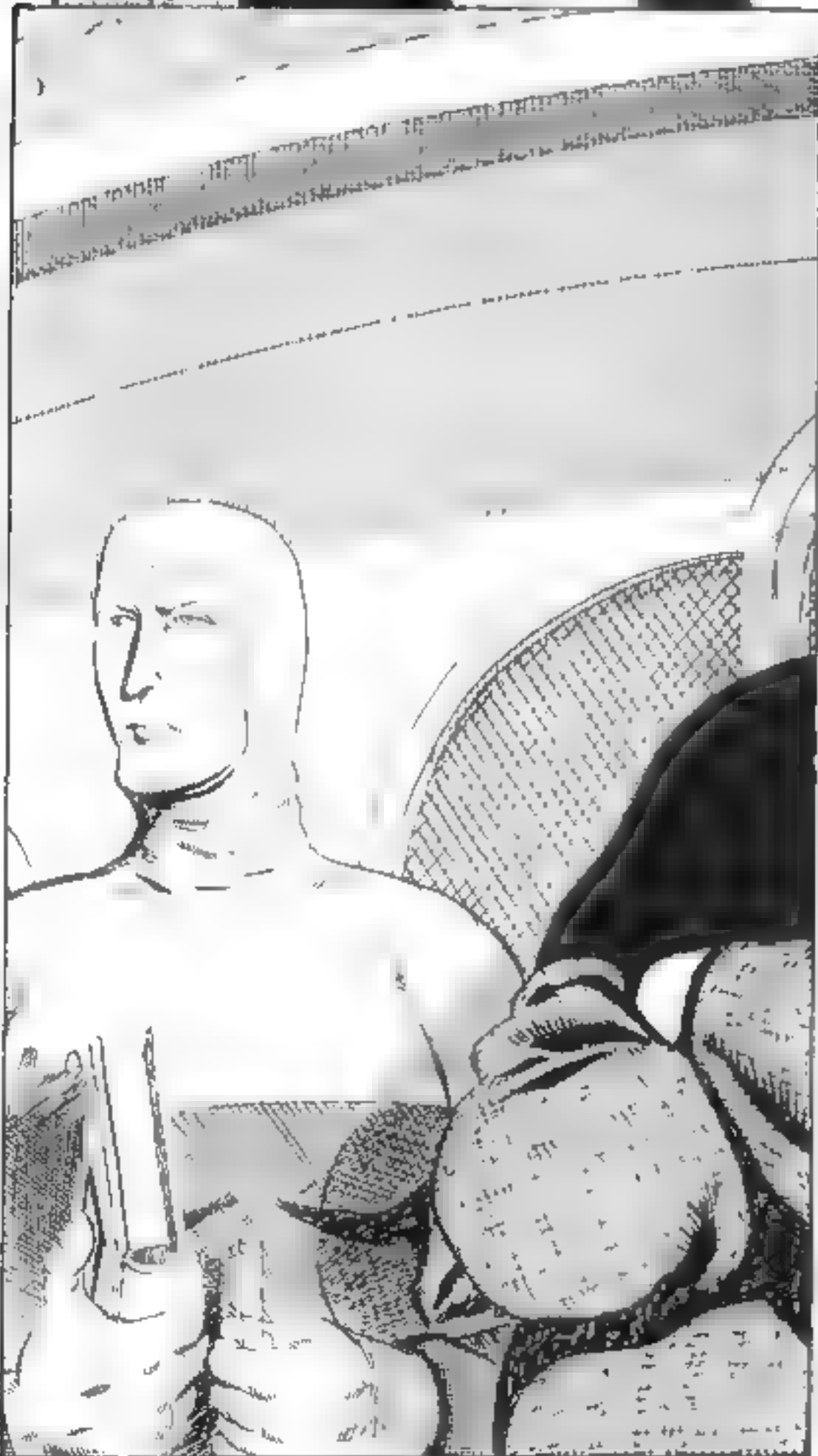




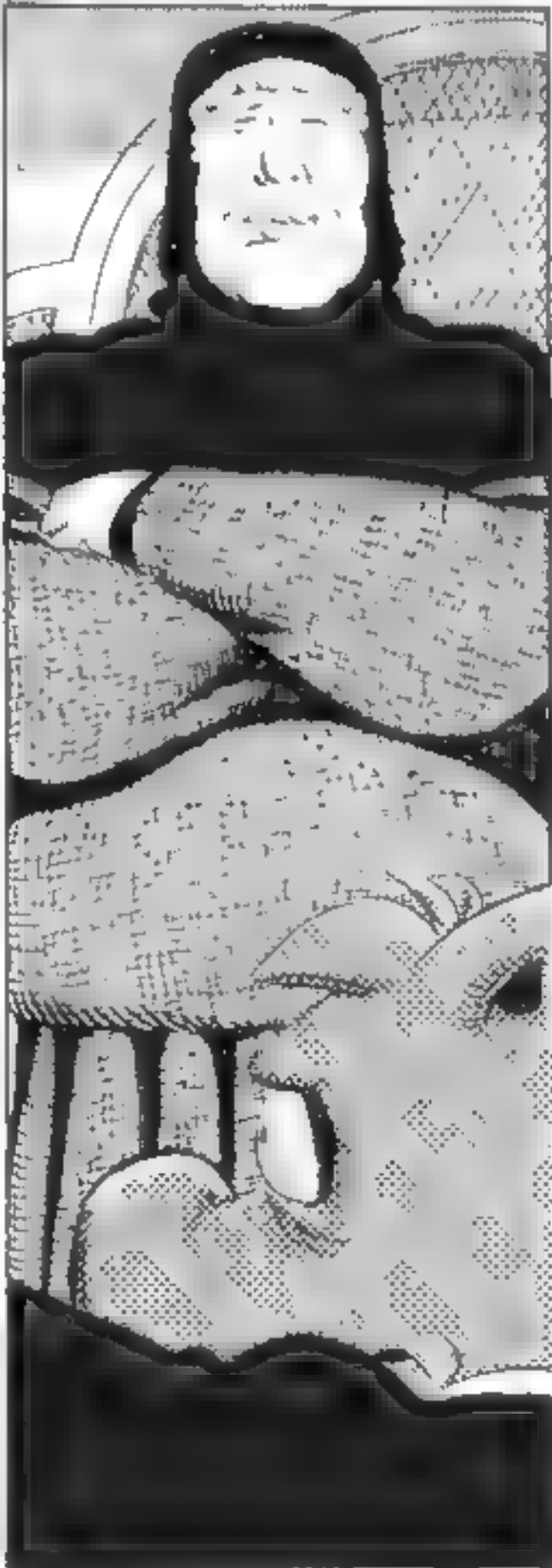




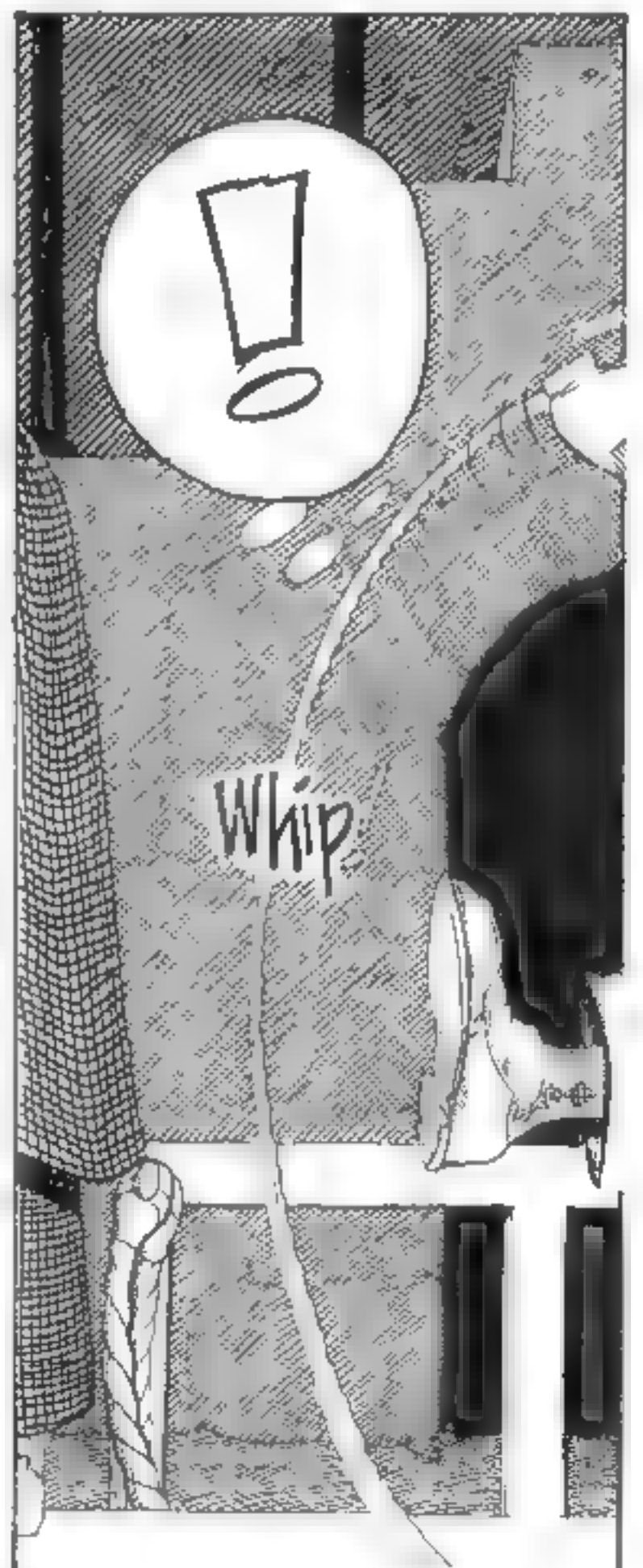
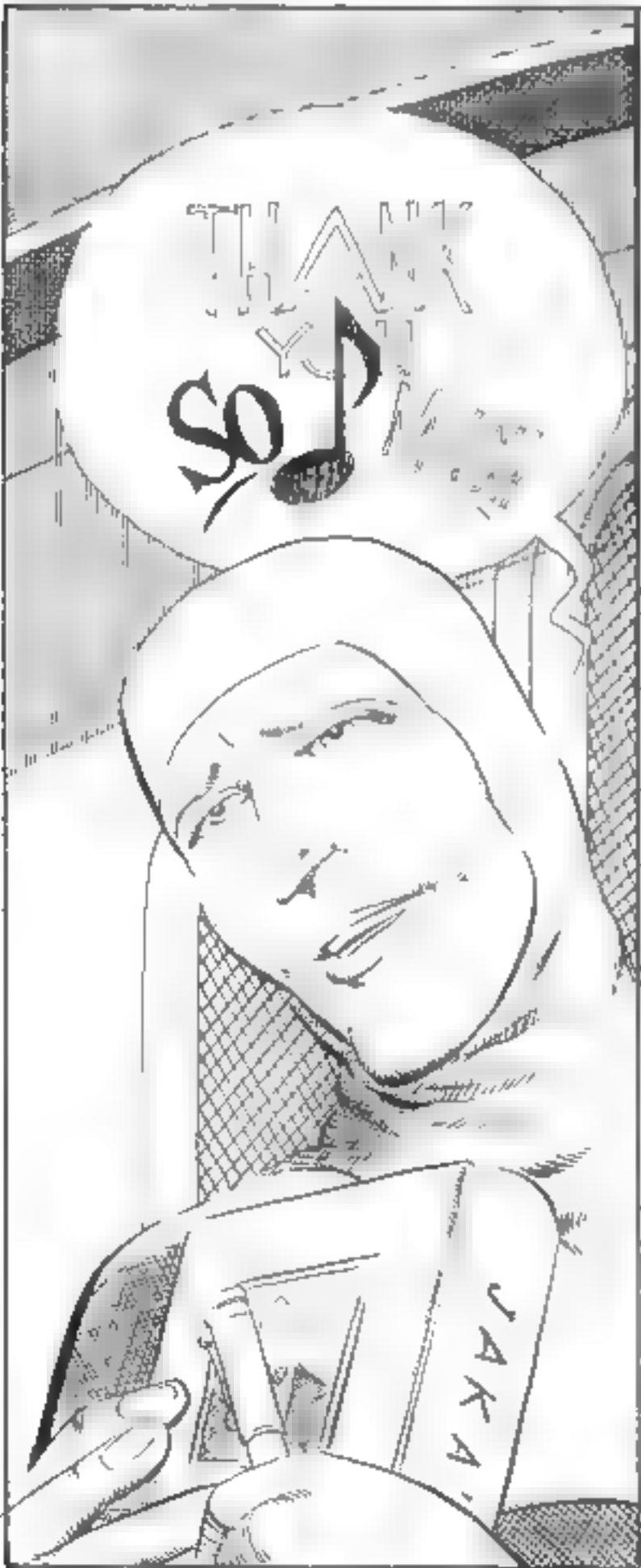


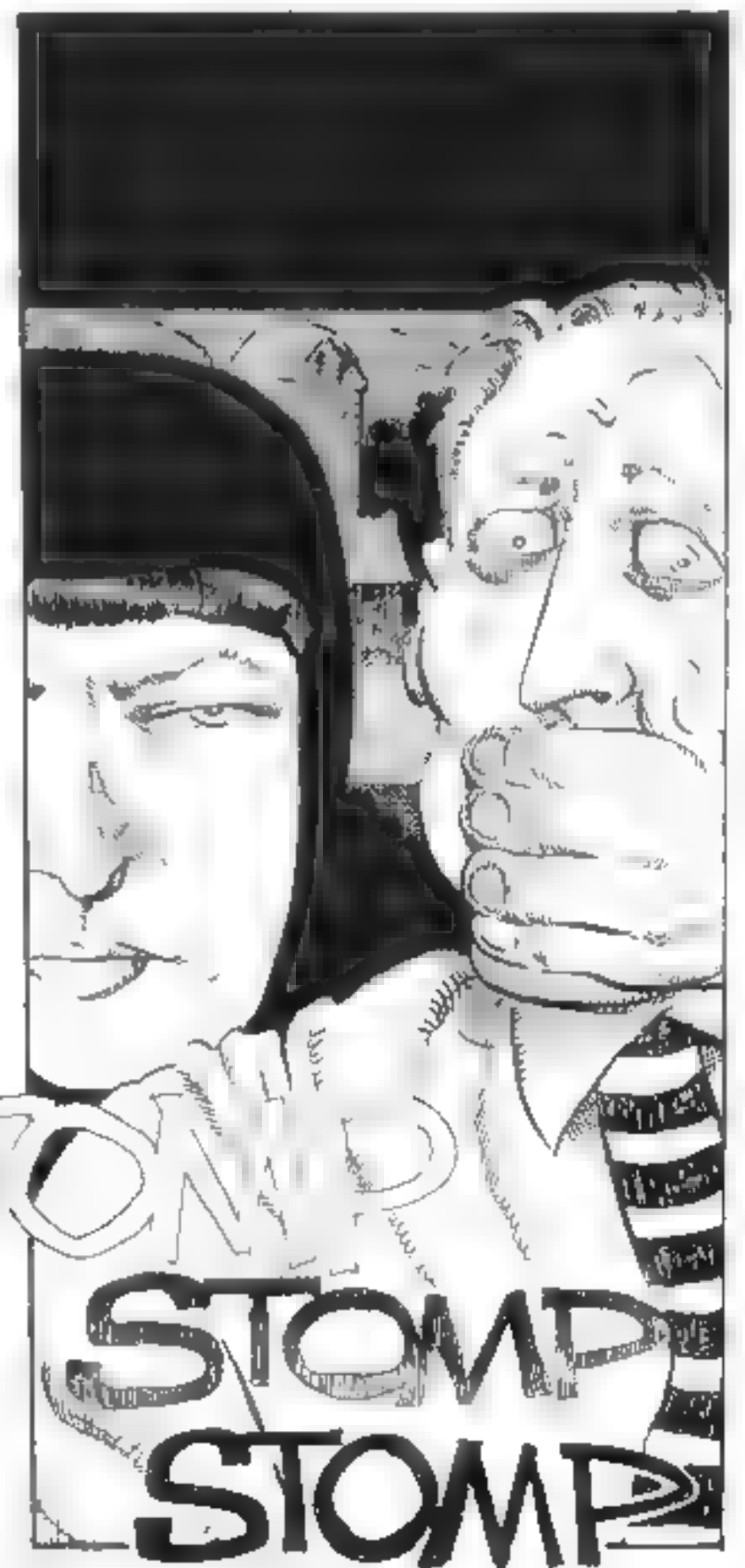
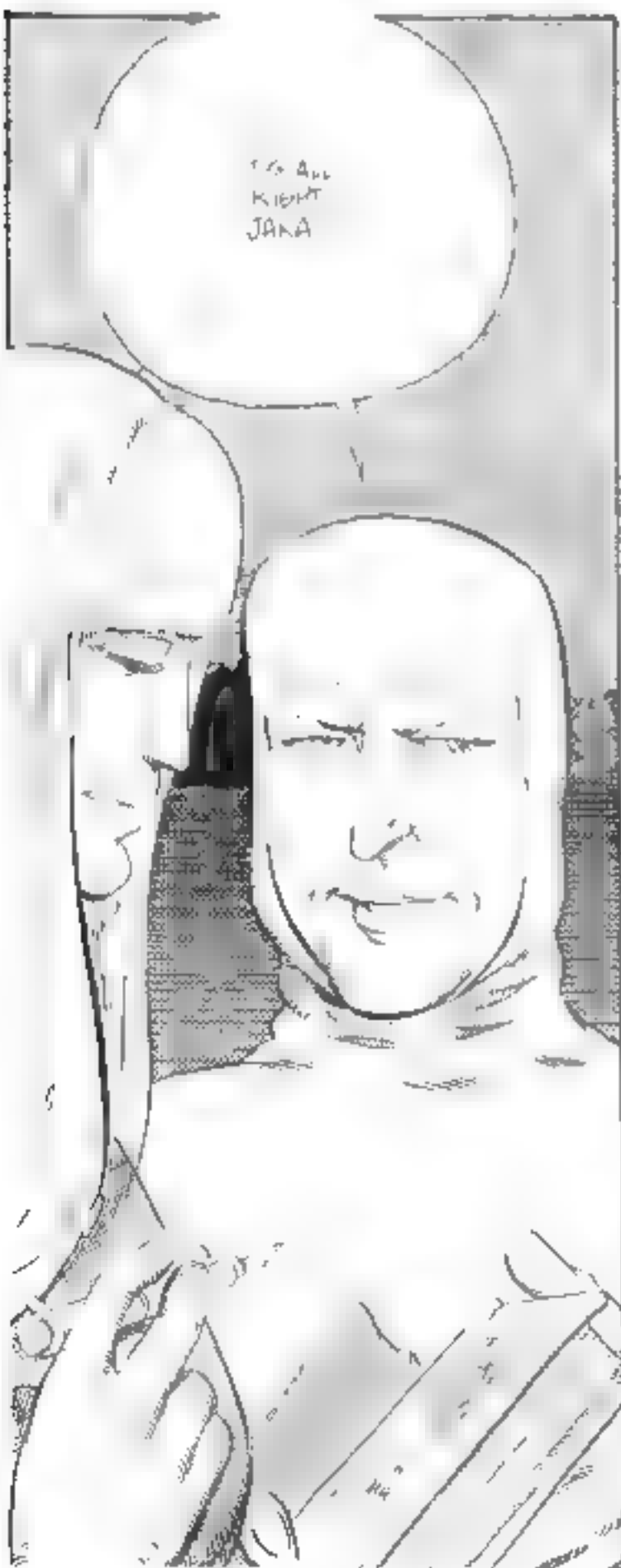




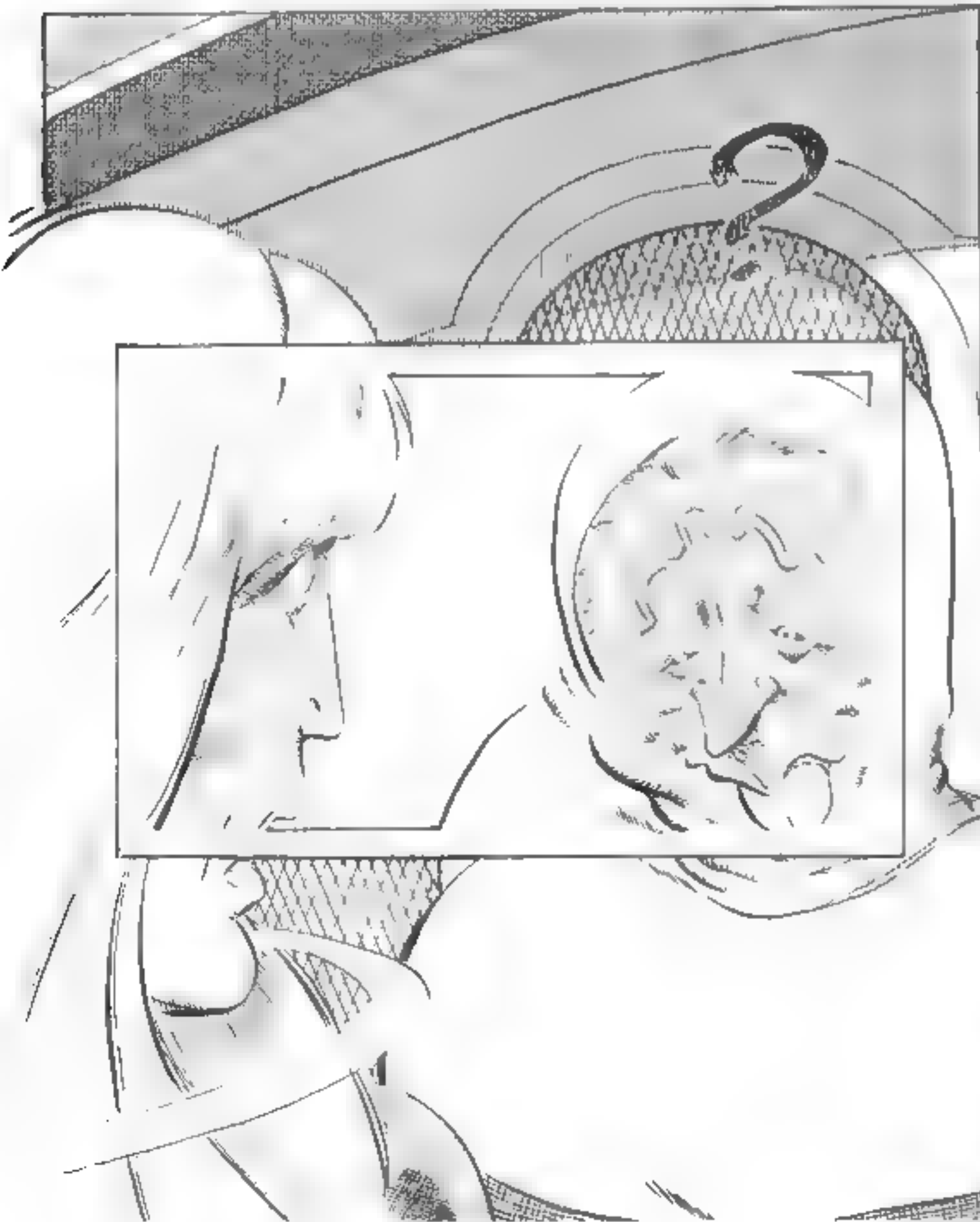
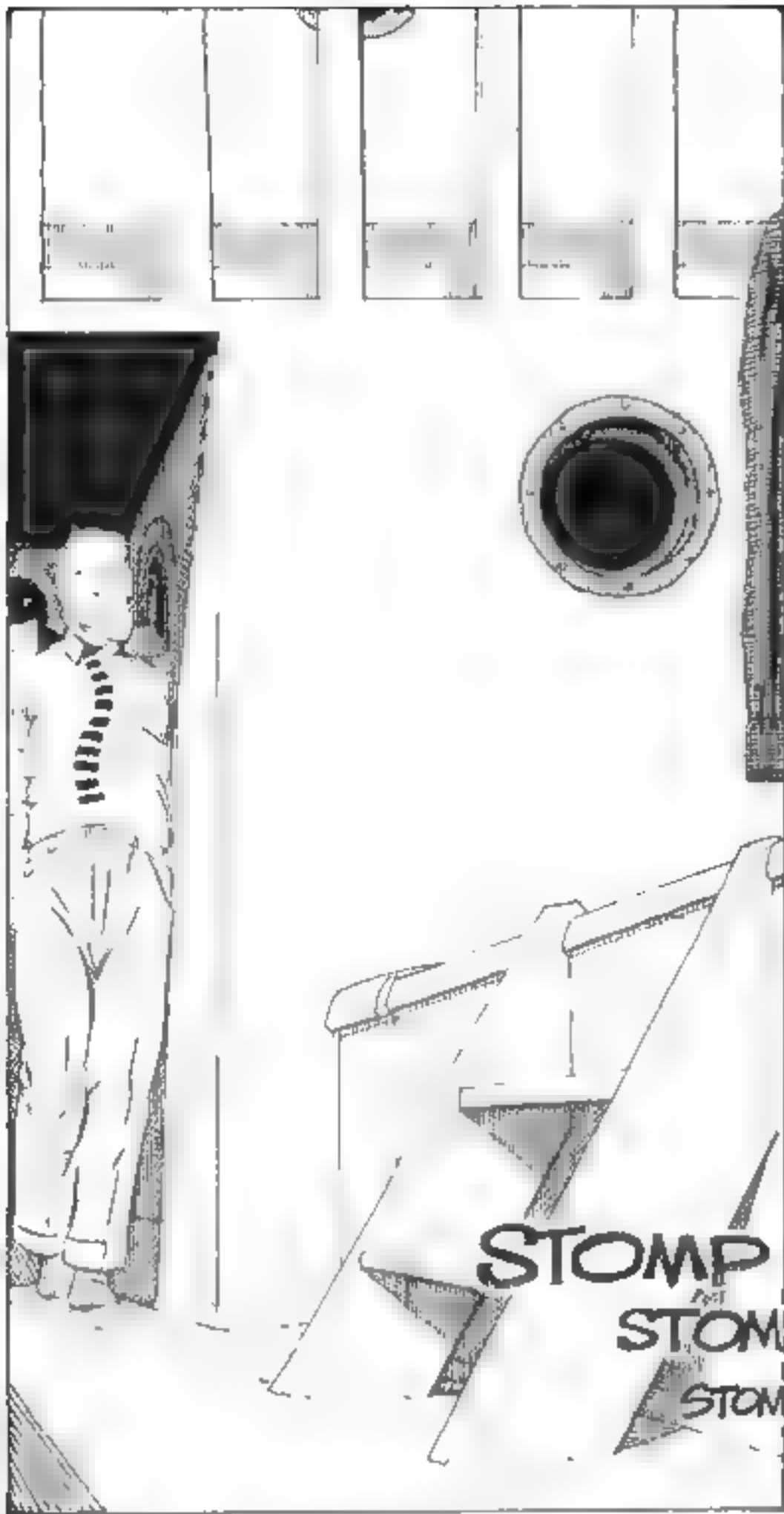




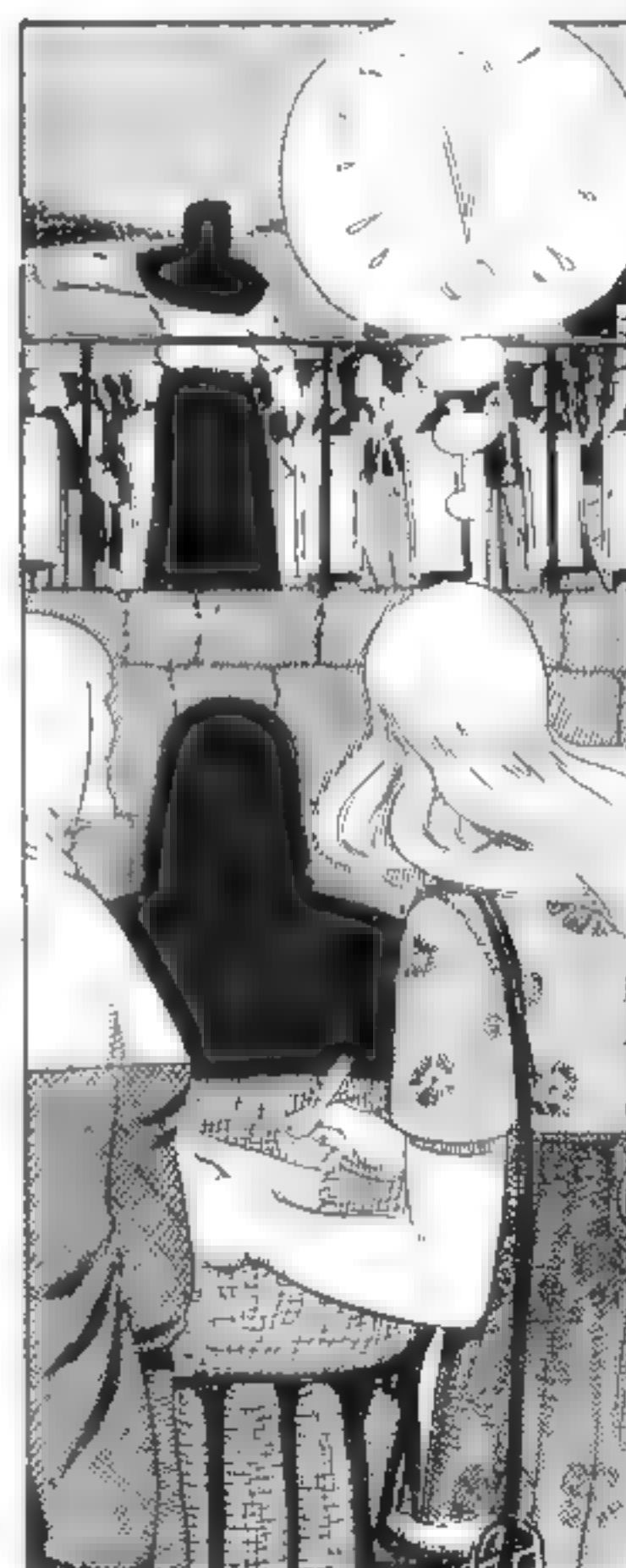
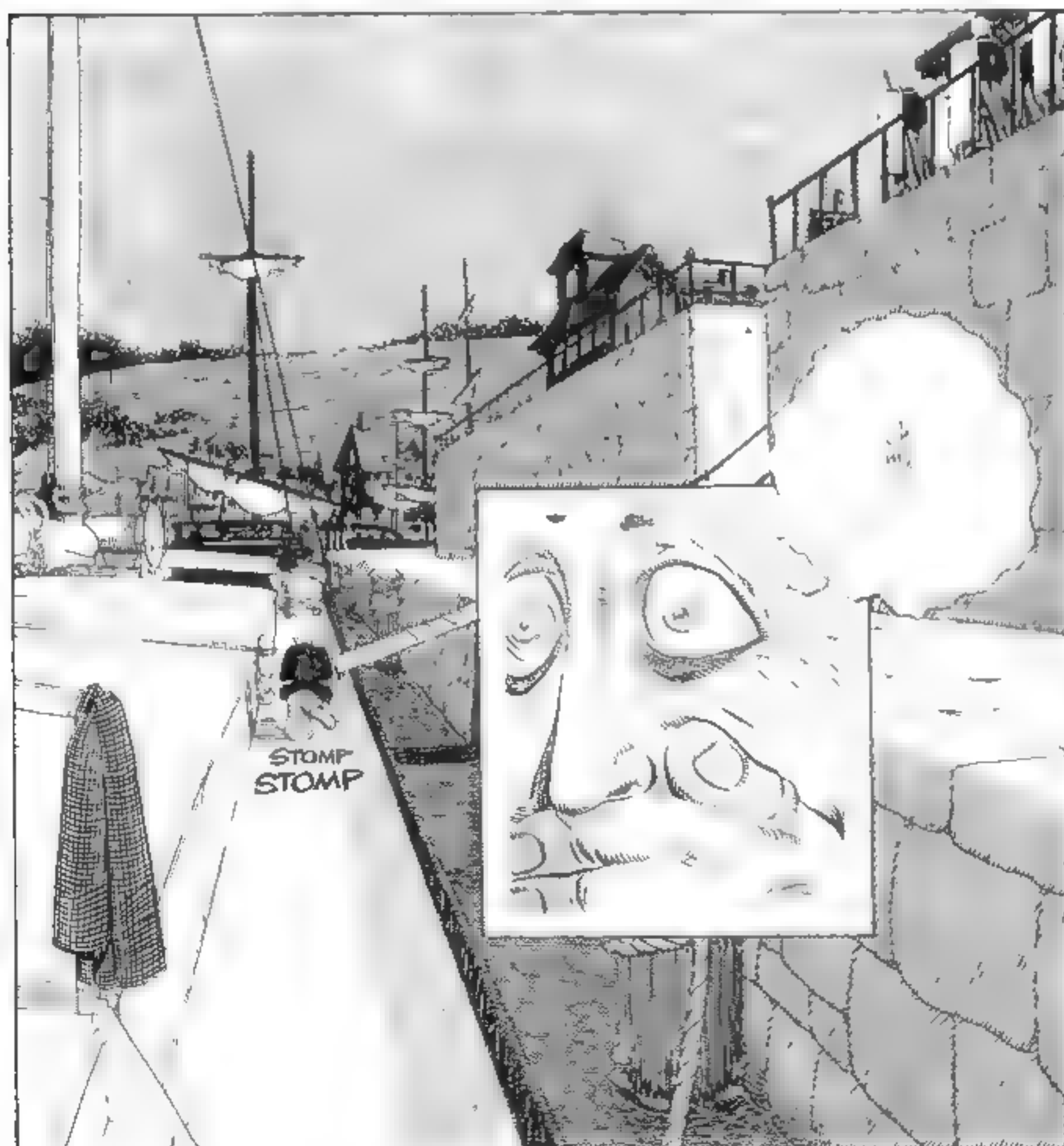
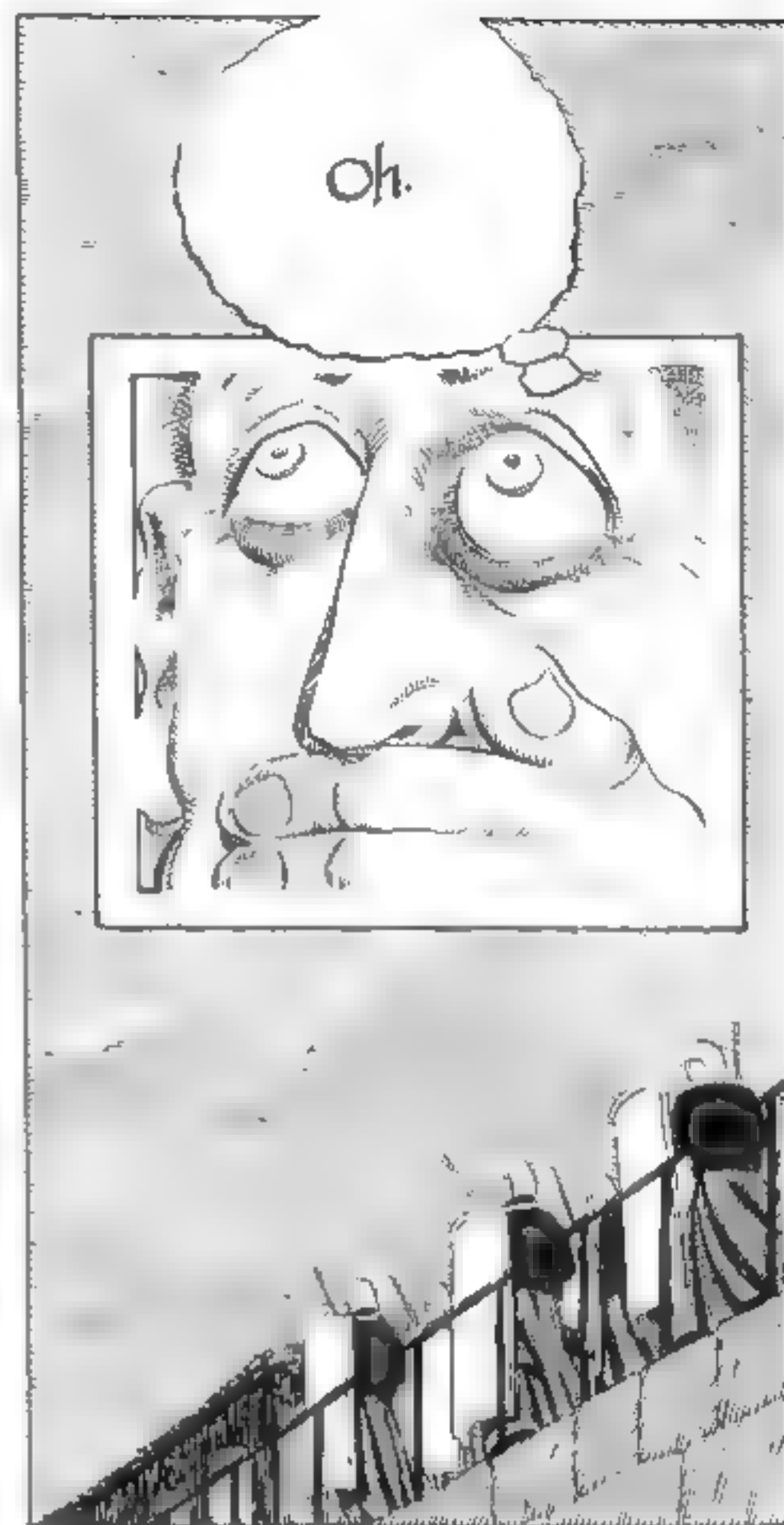


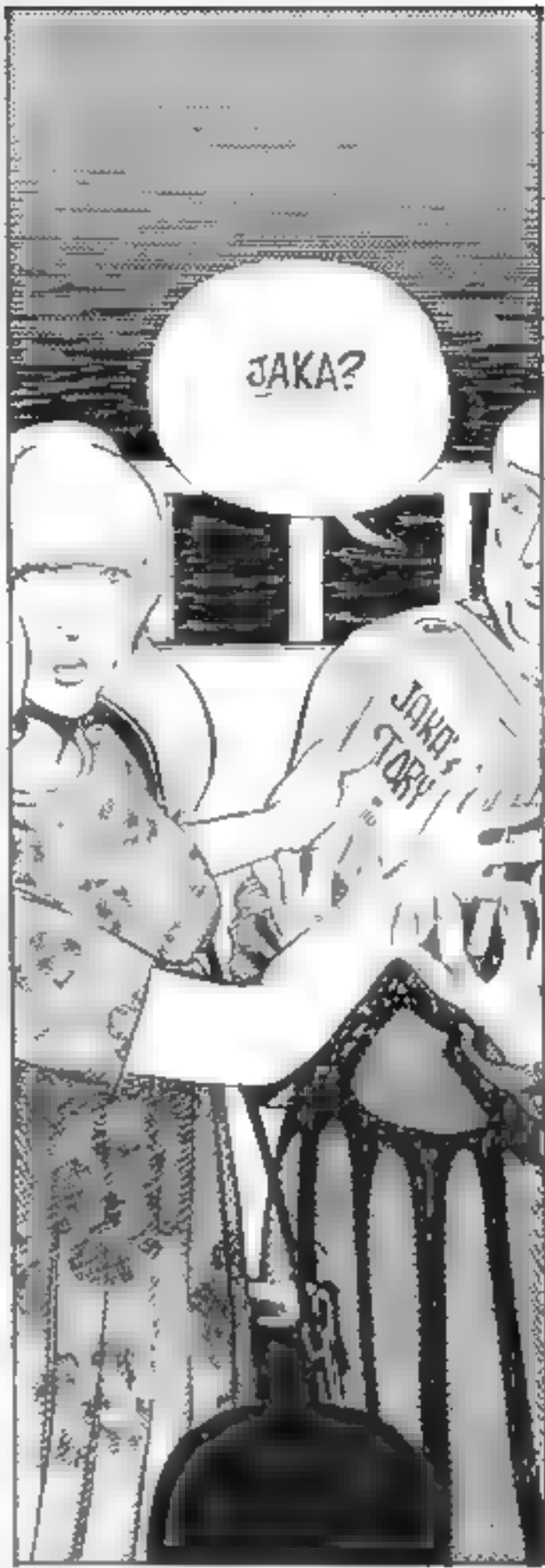
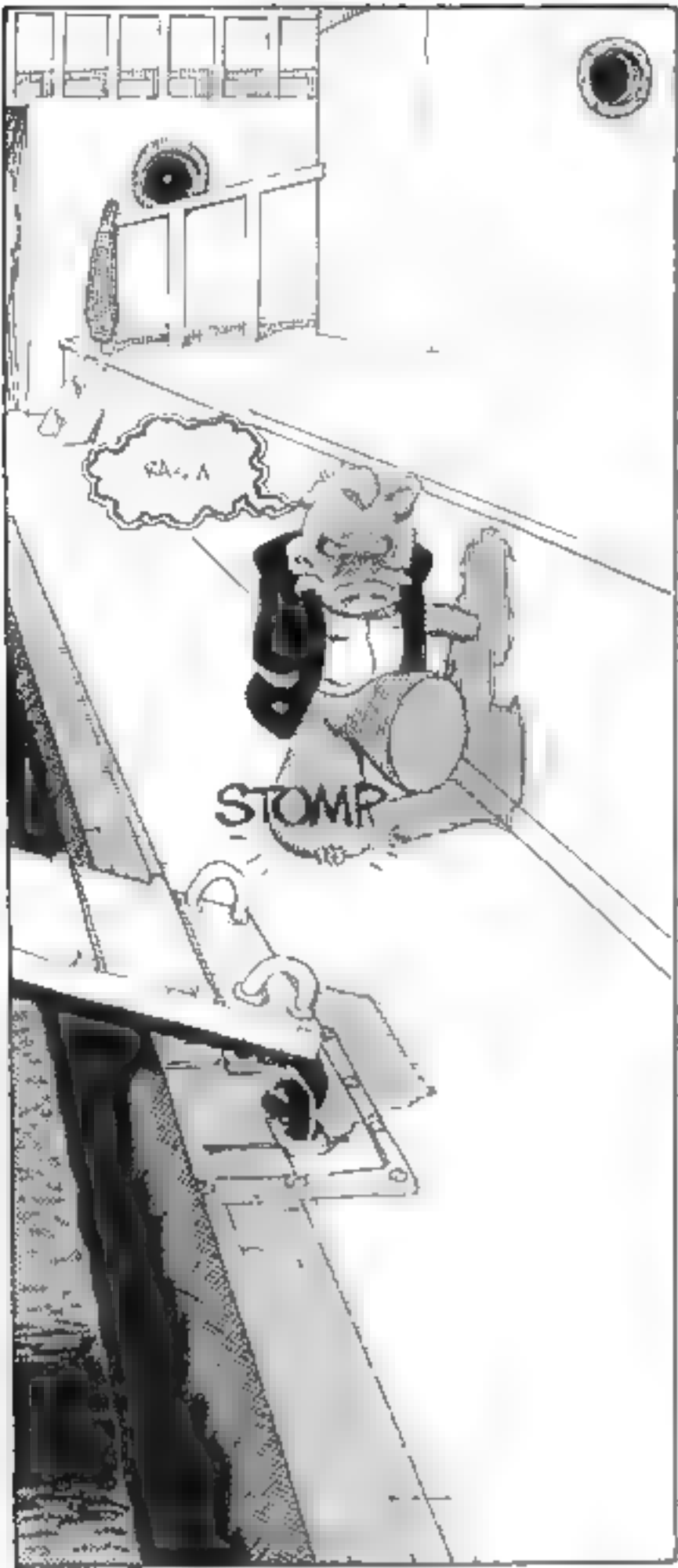


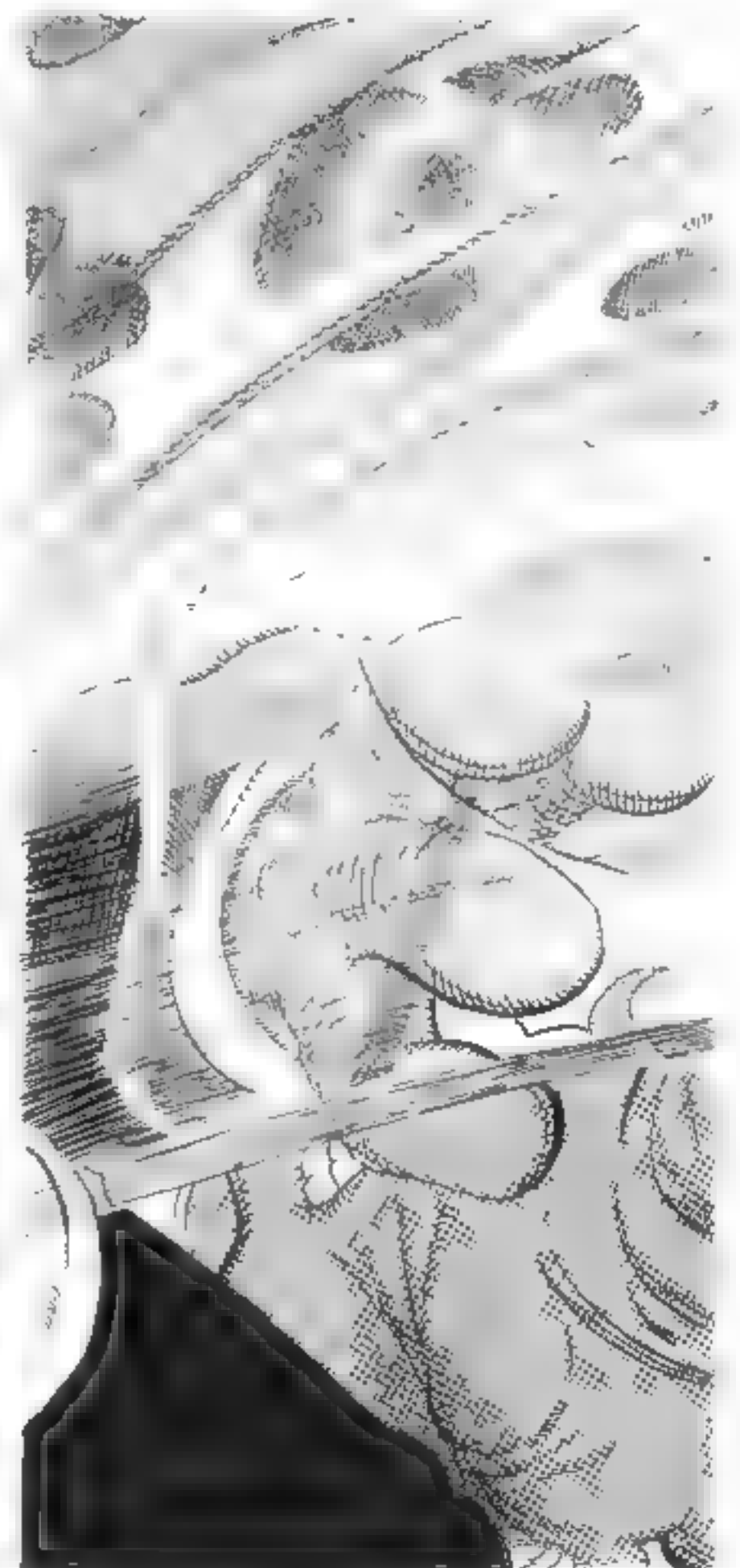
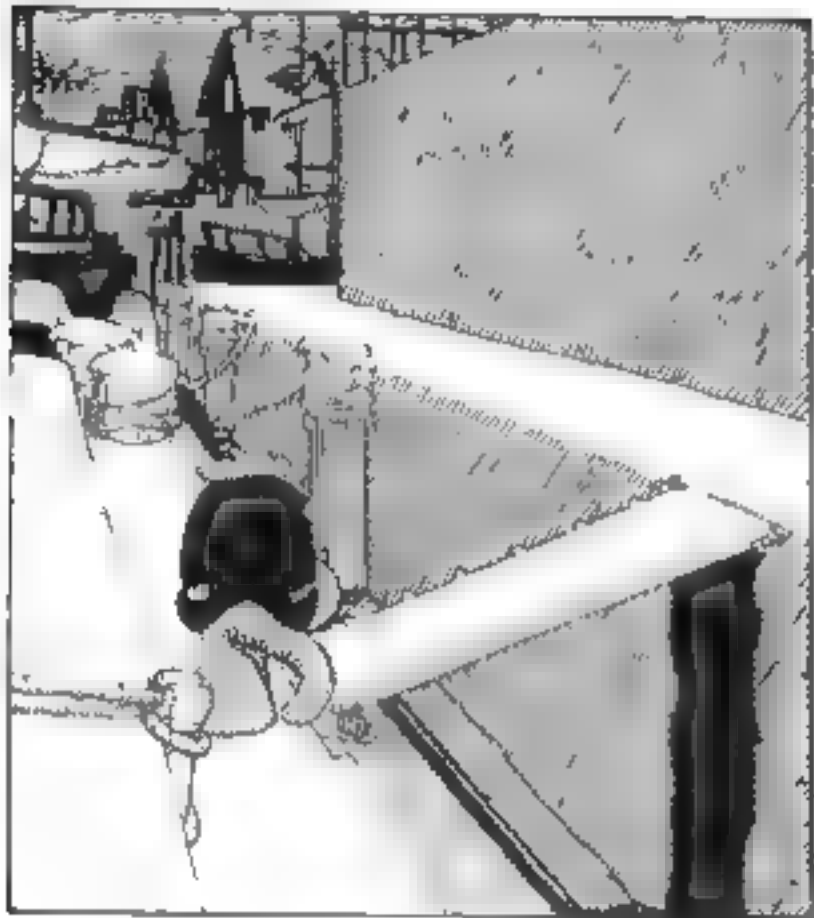




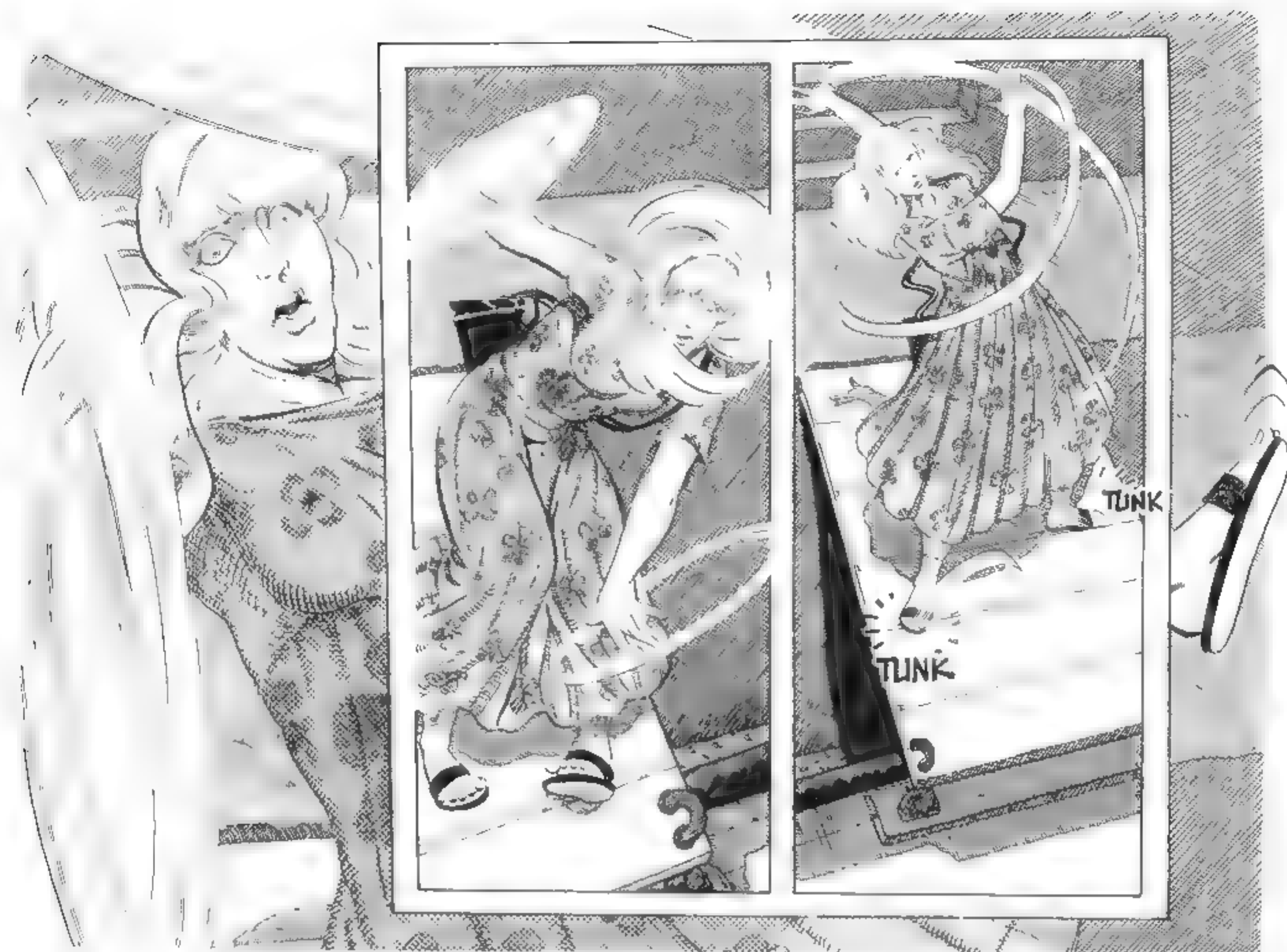


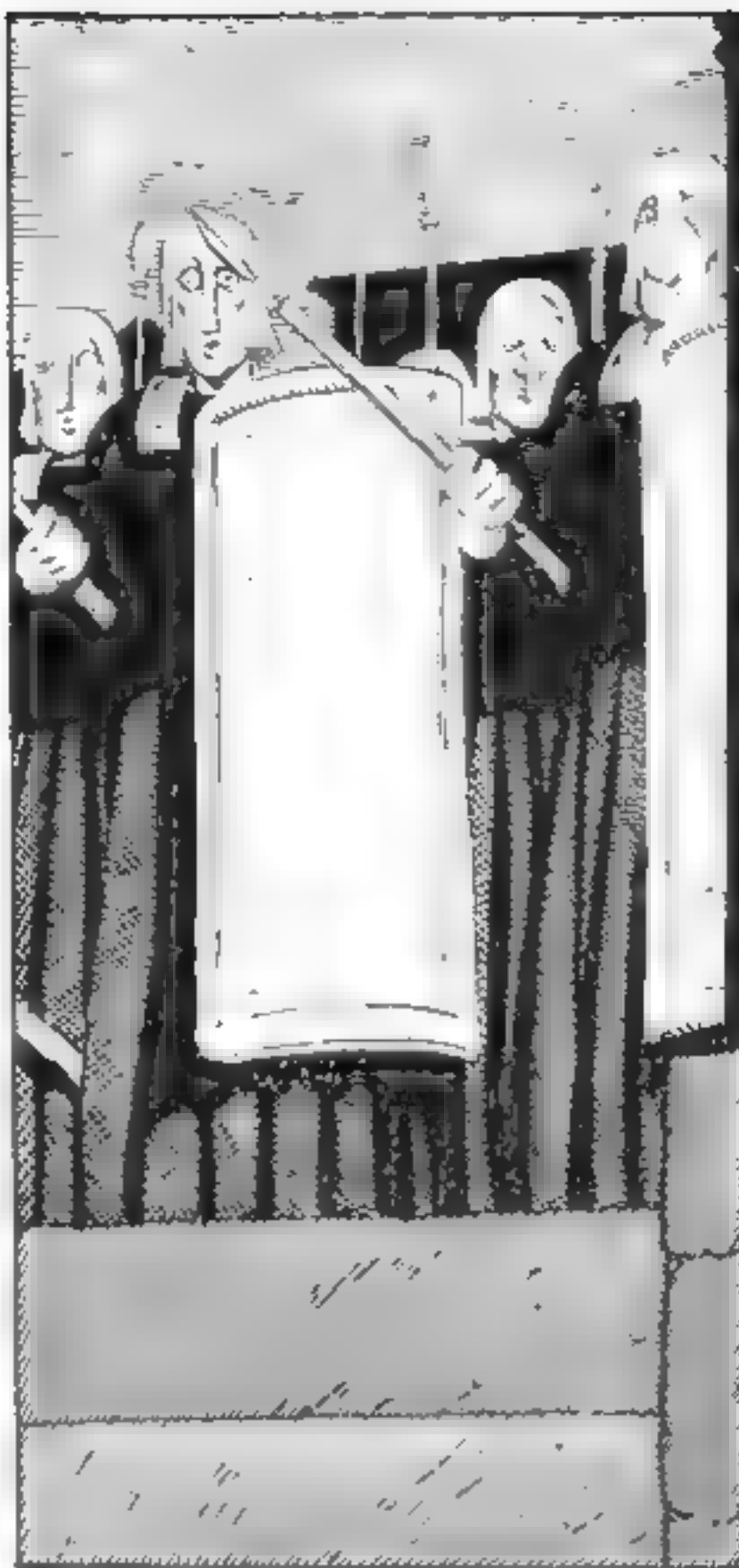
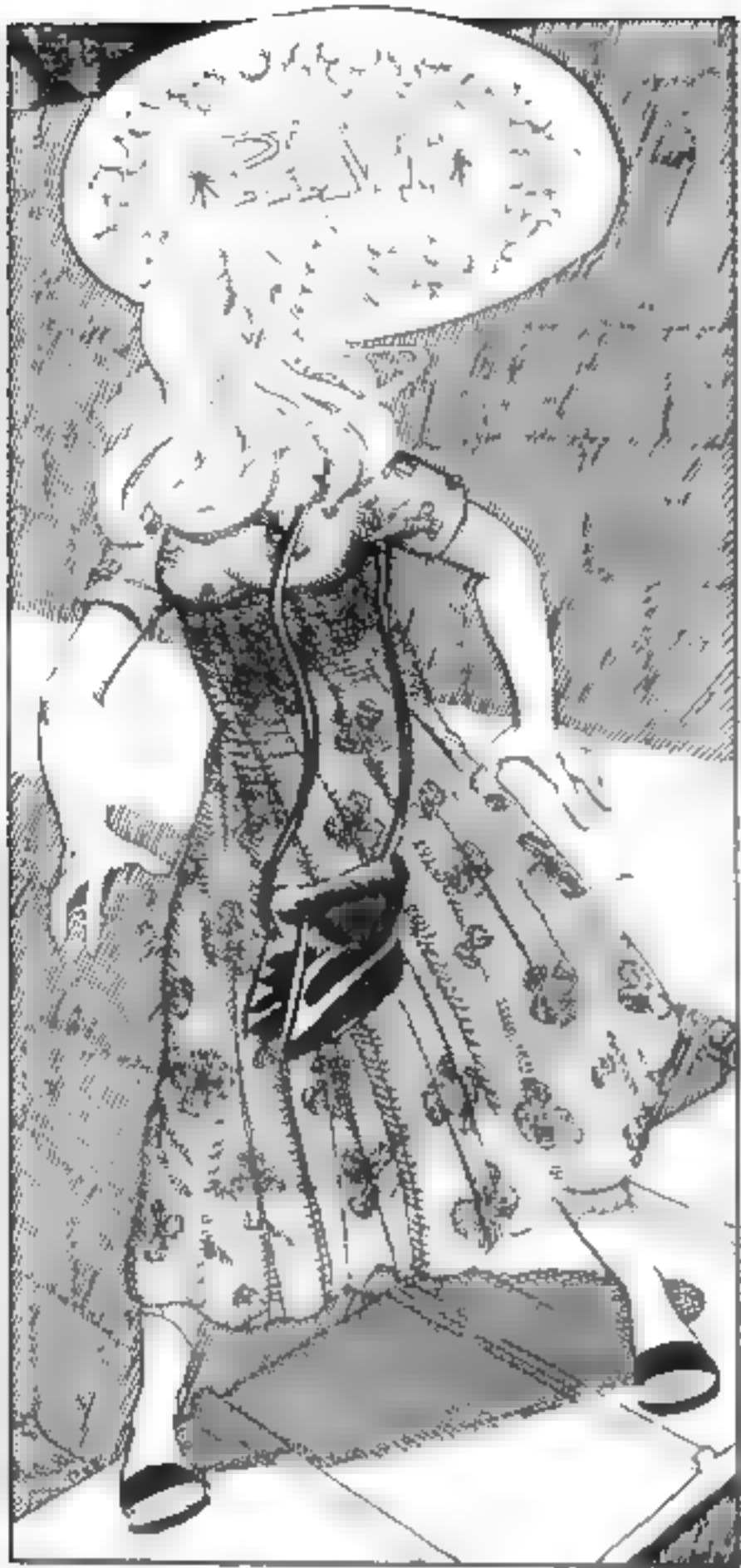




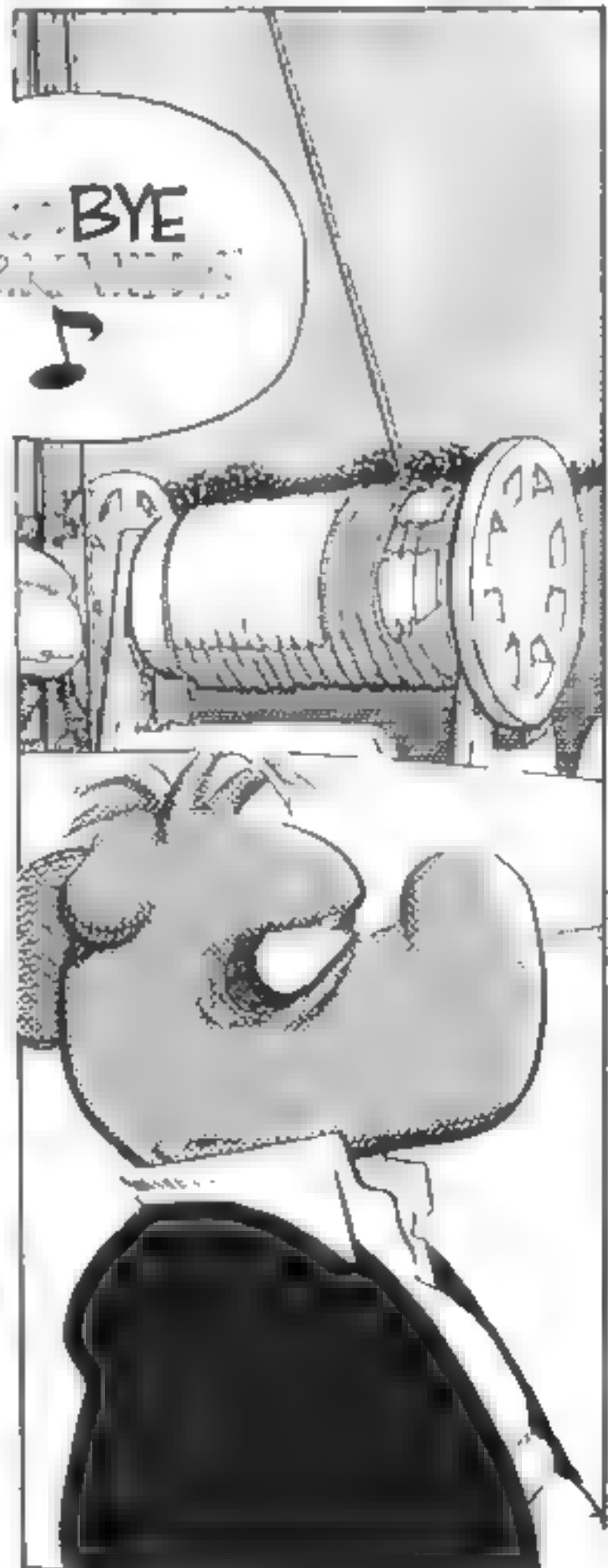




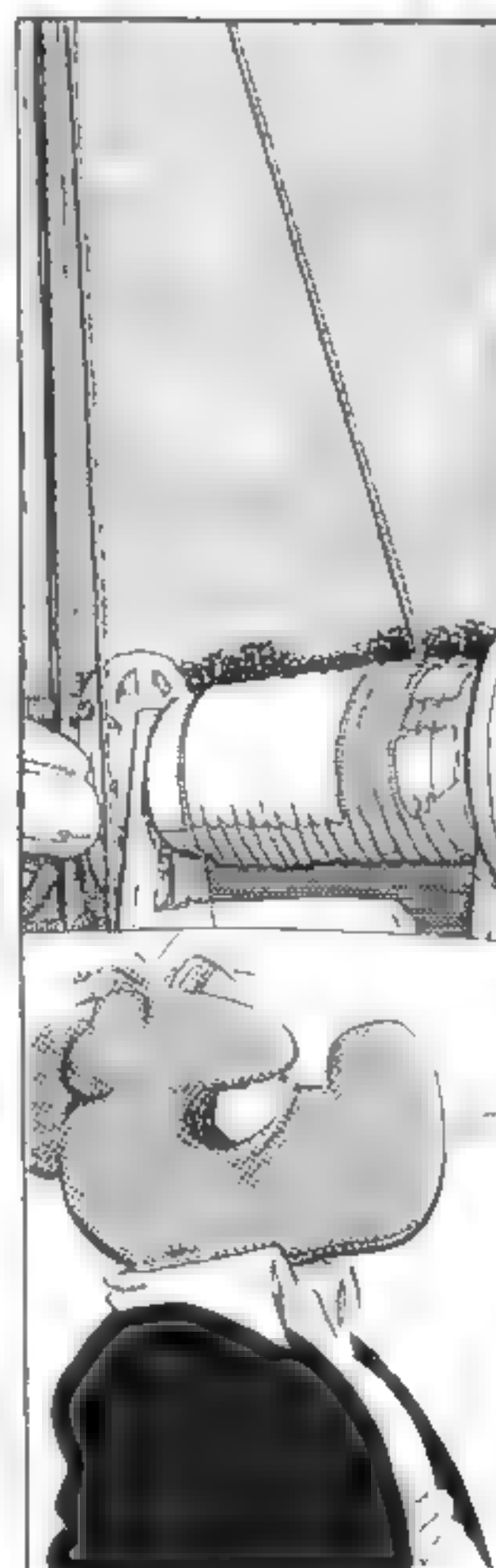
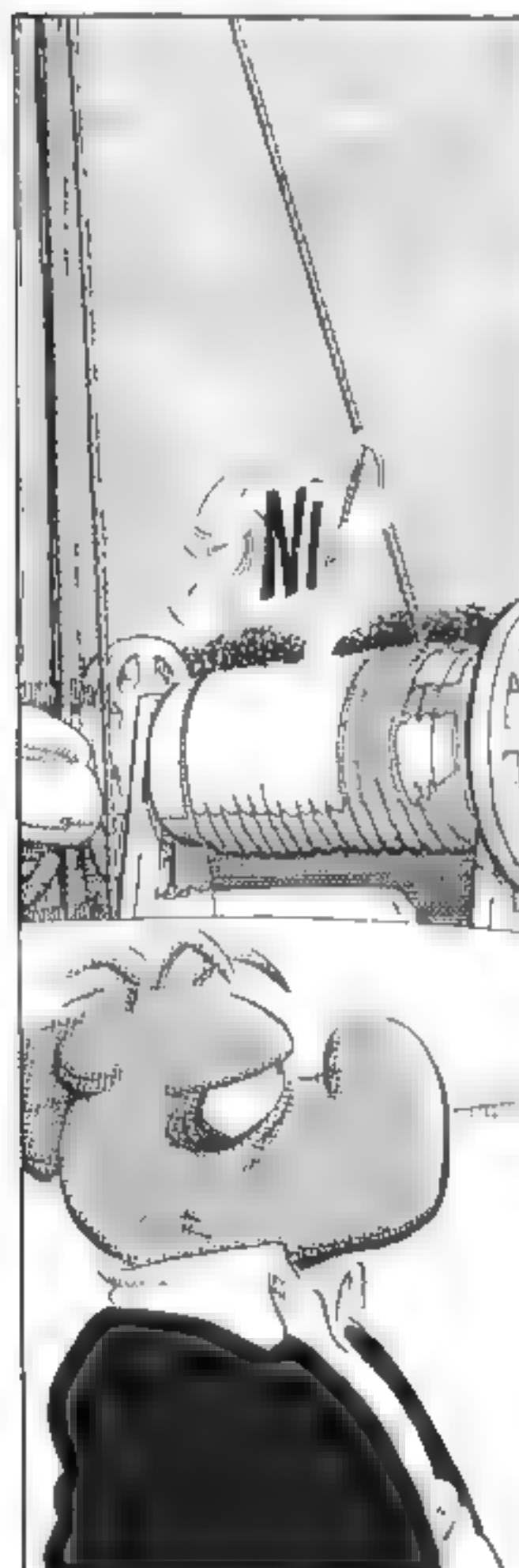
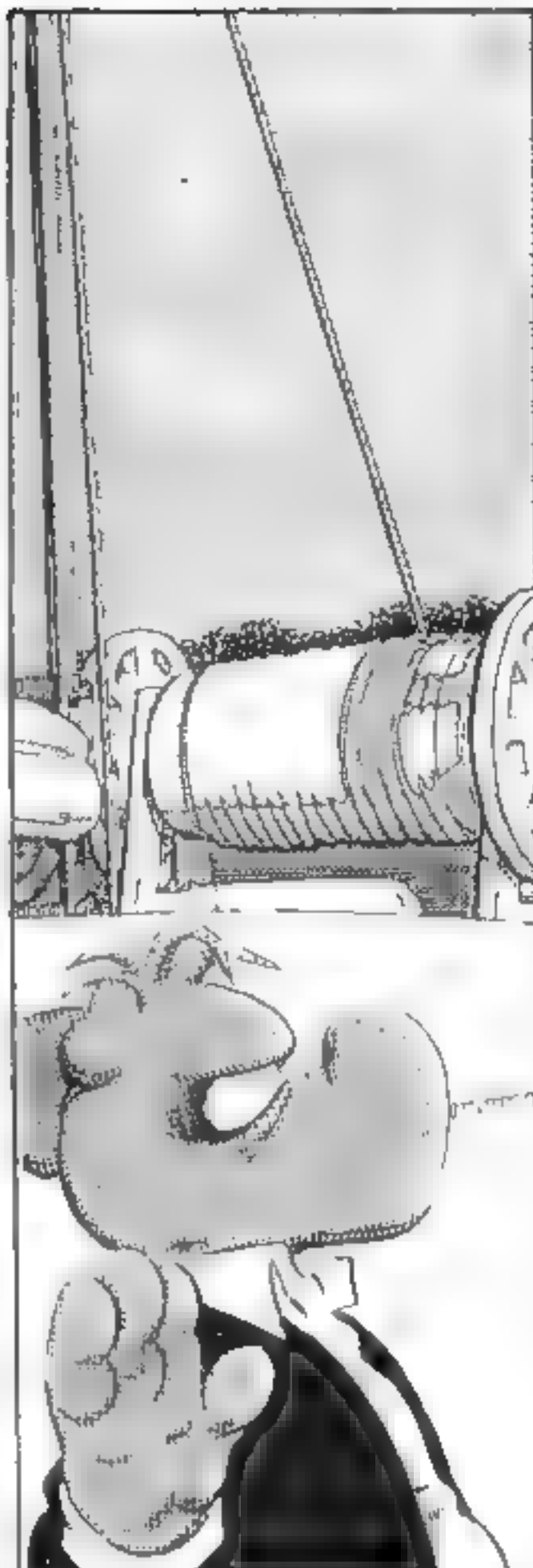
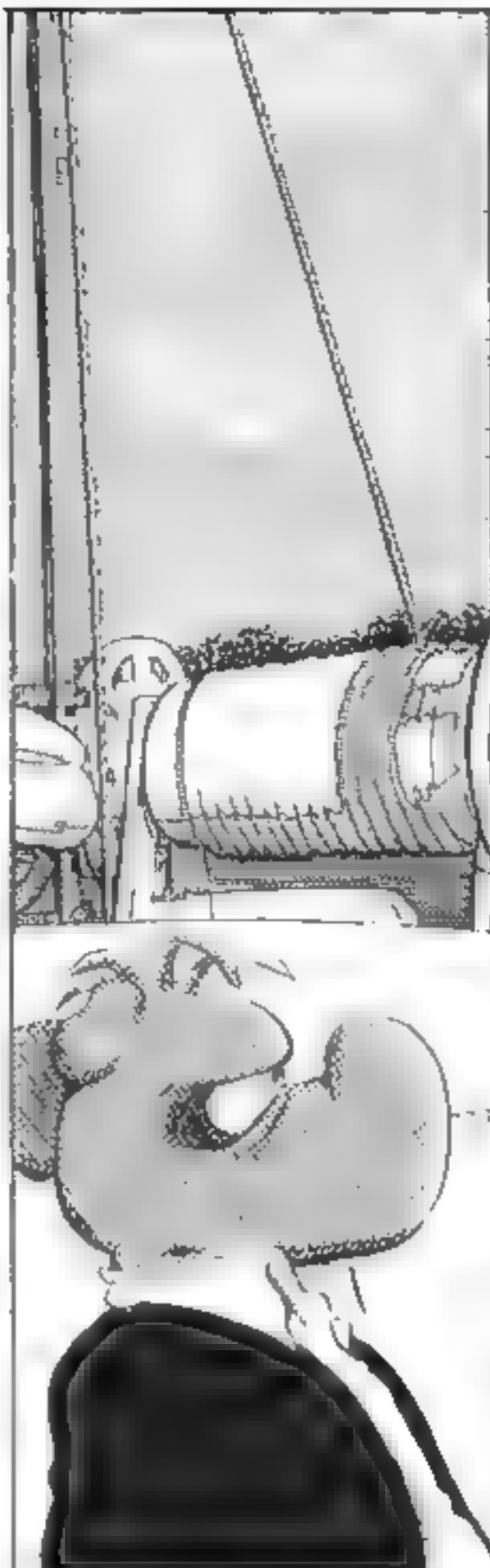
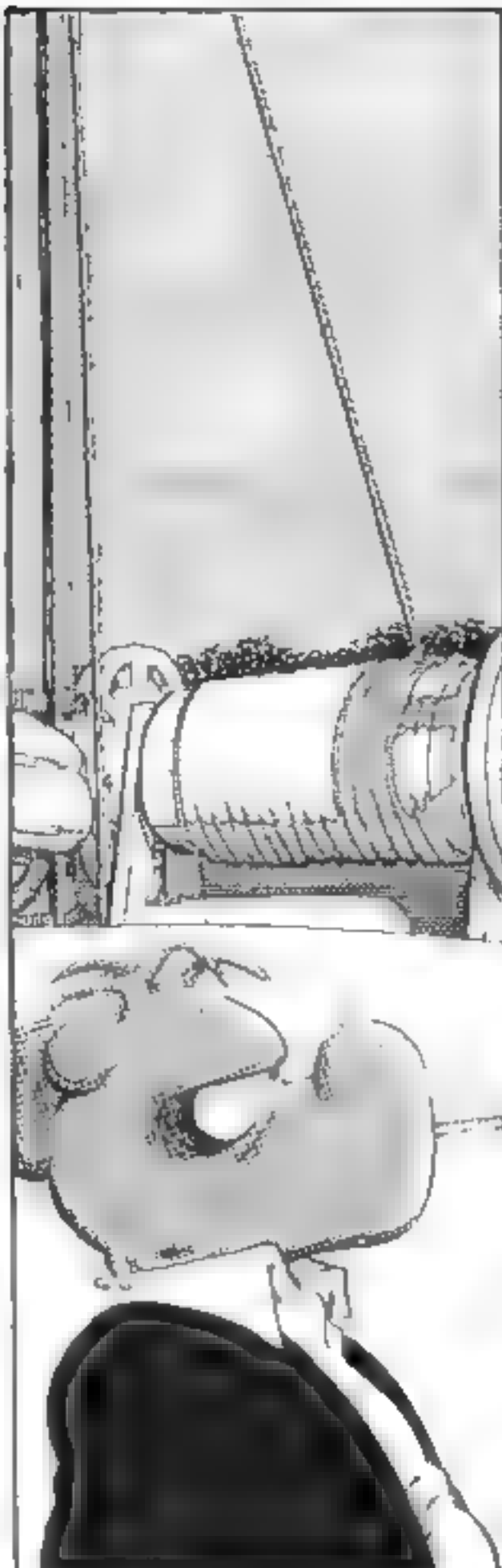


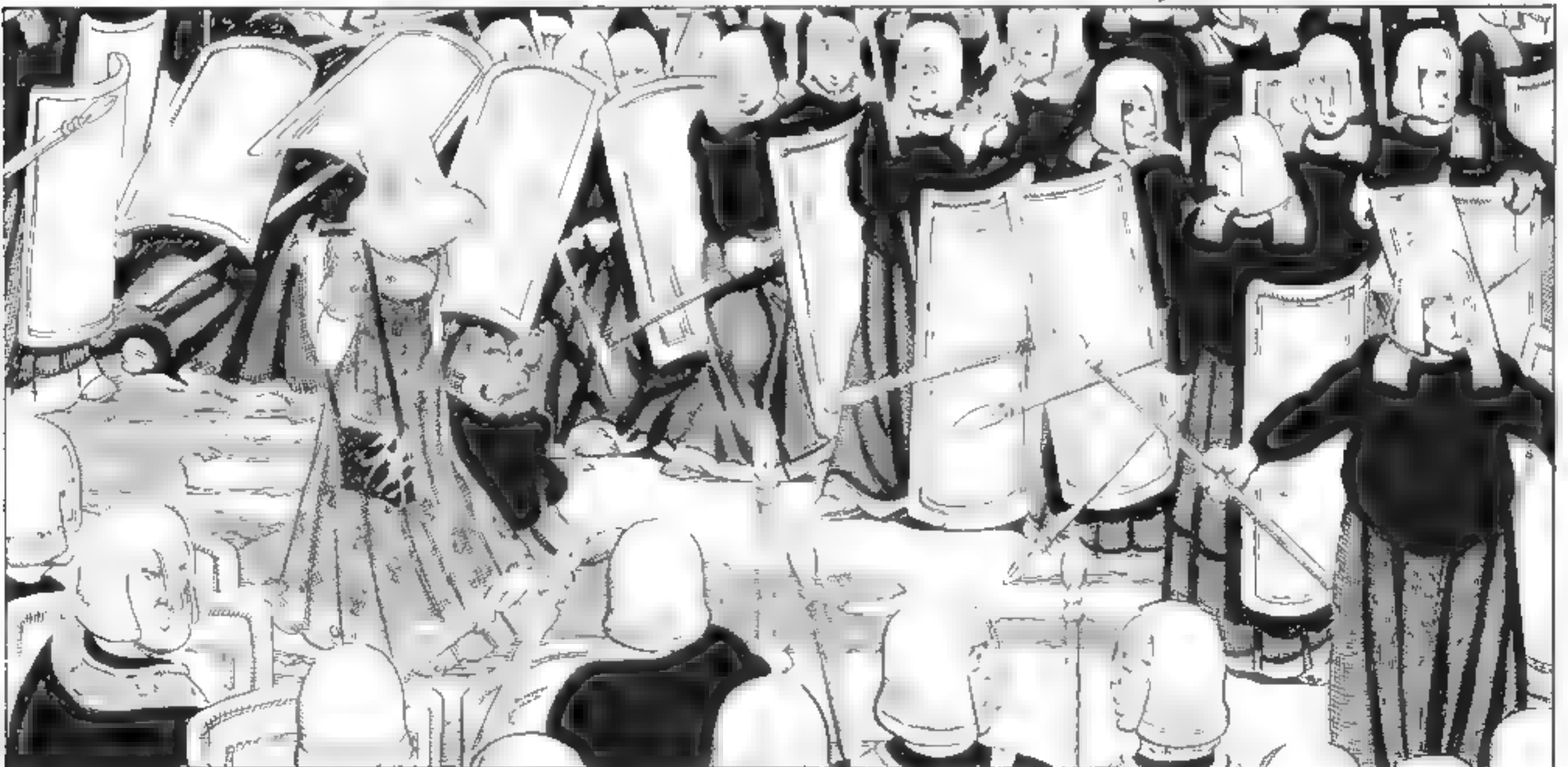




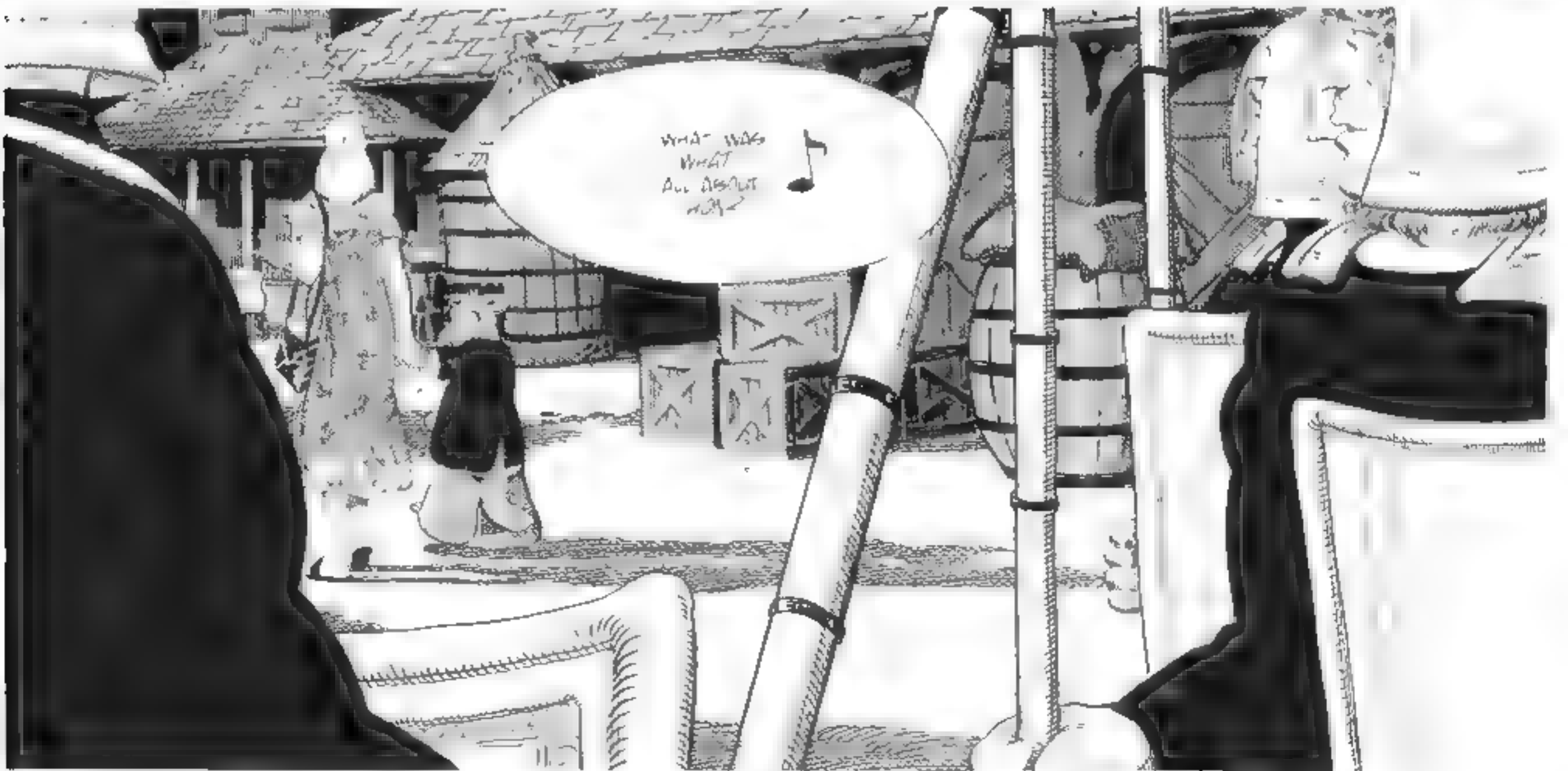
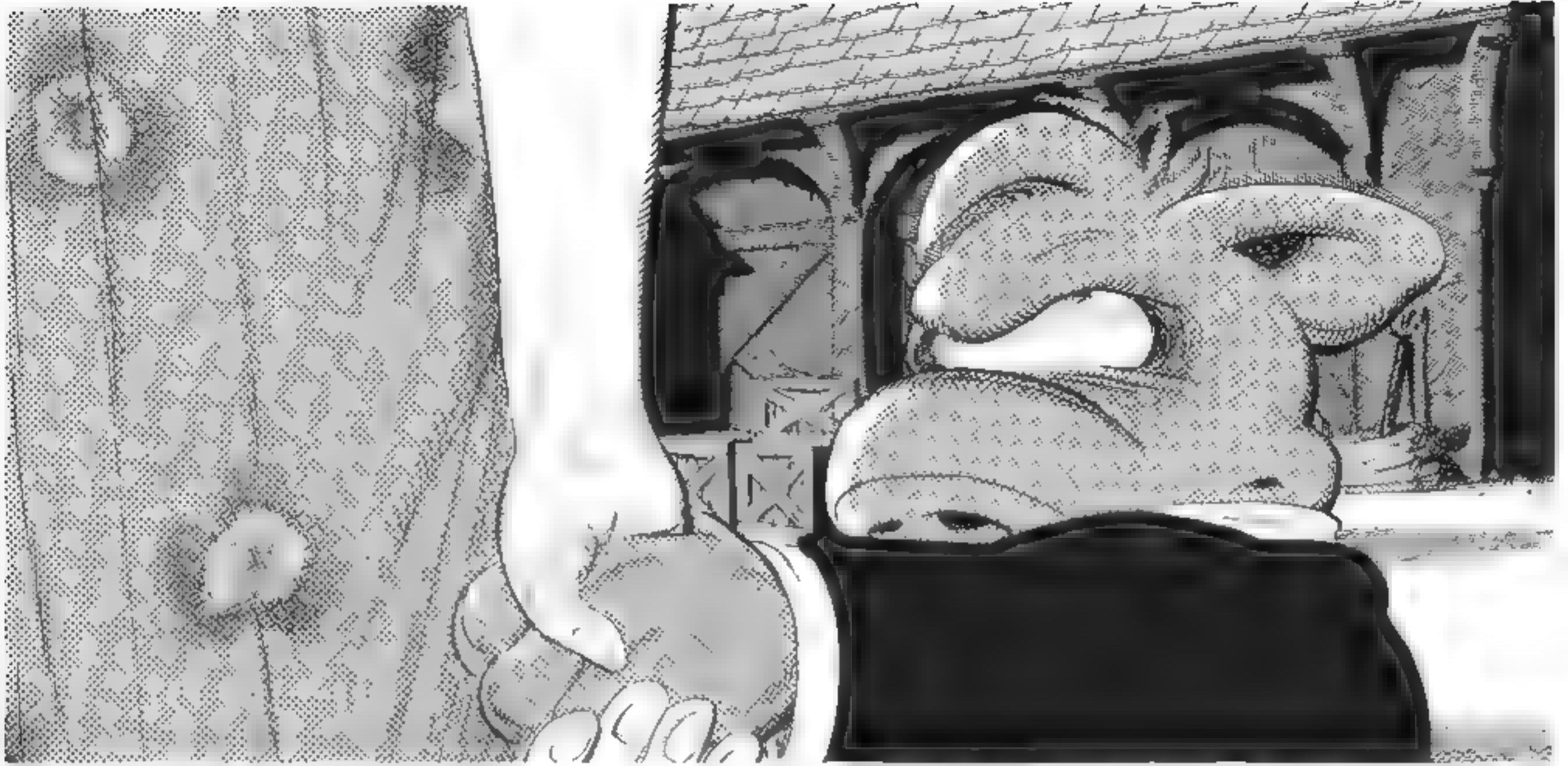














EPILASUS

## PLEASURE'S SIMPLE LIFE

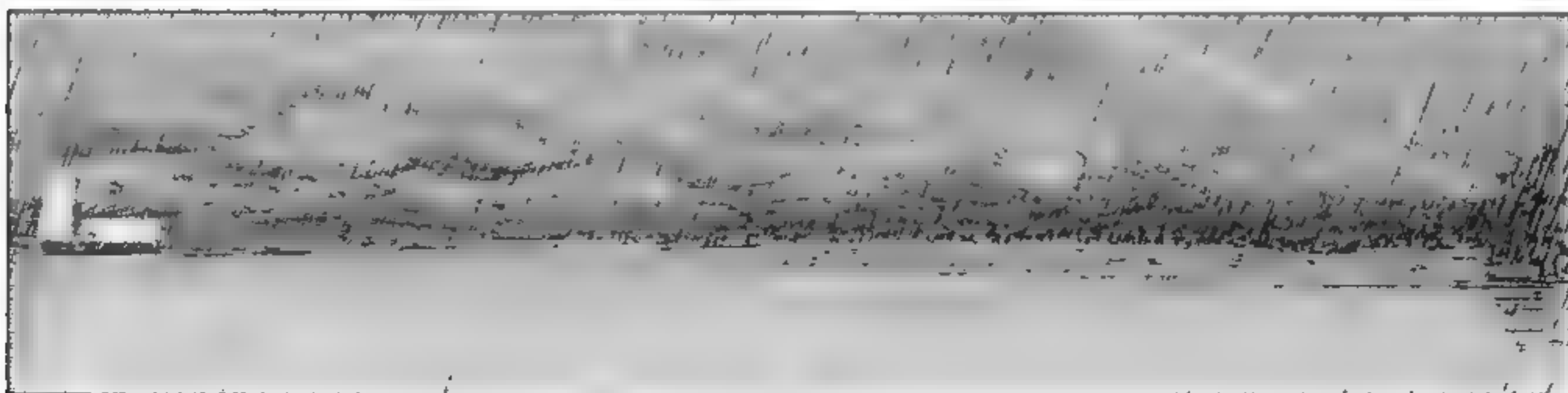
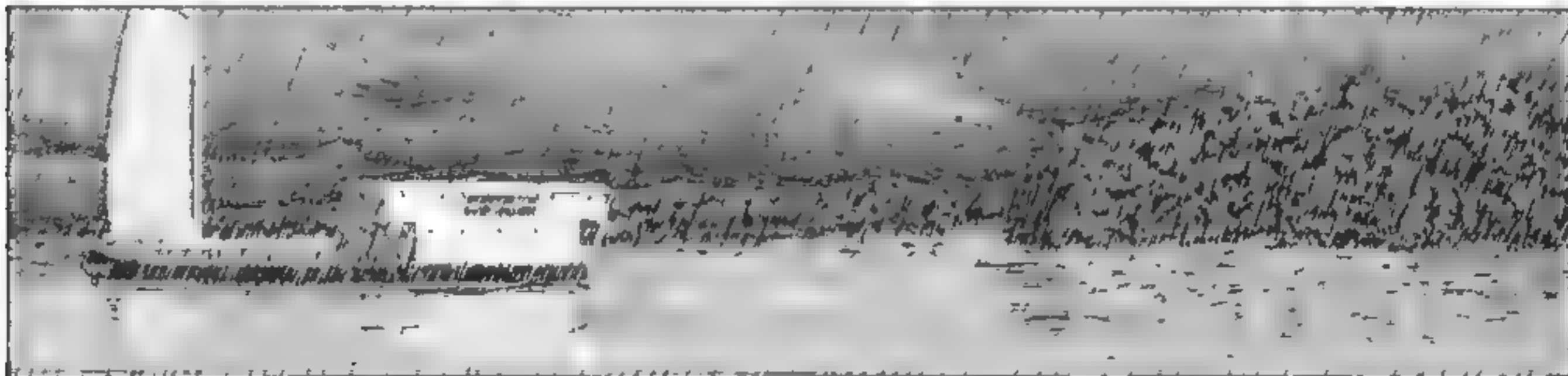
That eternal, sublime singularity which possesses all numerical precisions seemed—to Jay Anthony Diver—discontent with renderings of vague judgement by gender upon fellow gender. If there is a more specific, less nebulous ethic beneath the radiant façade and near to the bruised heart of all seminal transactions, one might believe somewhere in the mind there was a central motive which was not destructive but merely weak and sad

In the pursuit of happiness—which pursuit being quite possibly the most common, quite possibly the most universal “crime” of which we all, justly and equally, stand accused—these two must be marked as innocent, chiefly for the preeminence of their mutual love for one another. Their antagonisms were always fleeting and transitory—Ginevra and Jozan embraced each other and their respective worlds with unswerving devotion—embraced each other and each other alone in kisses and in wine and with the same ingenuousness in the madness of moonlight as they did under the warm and bright sun of inviolate fidelity.

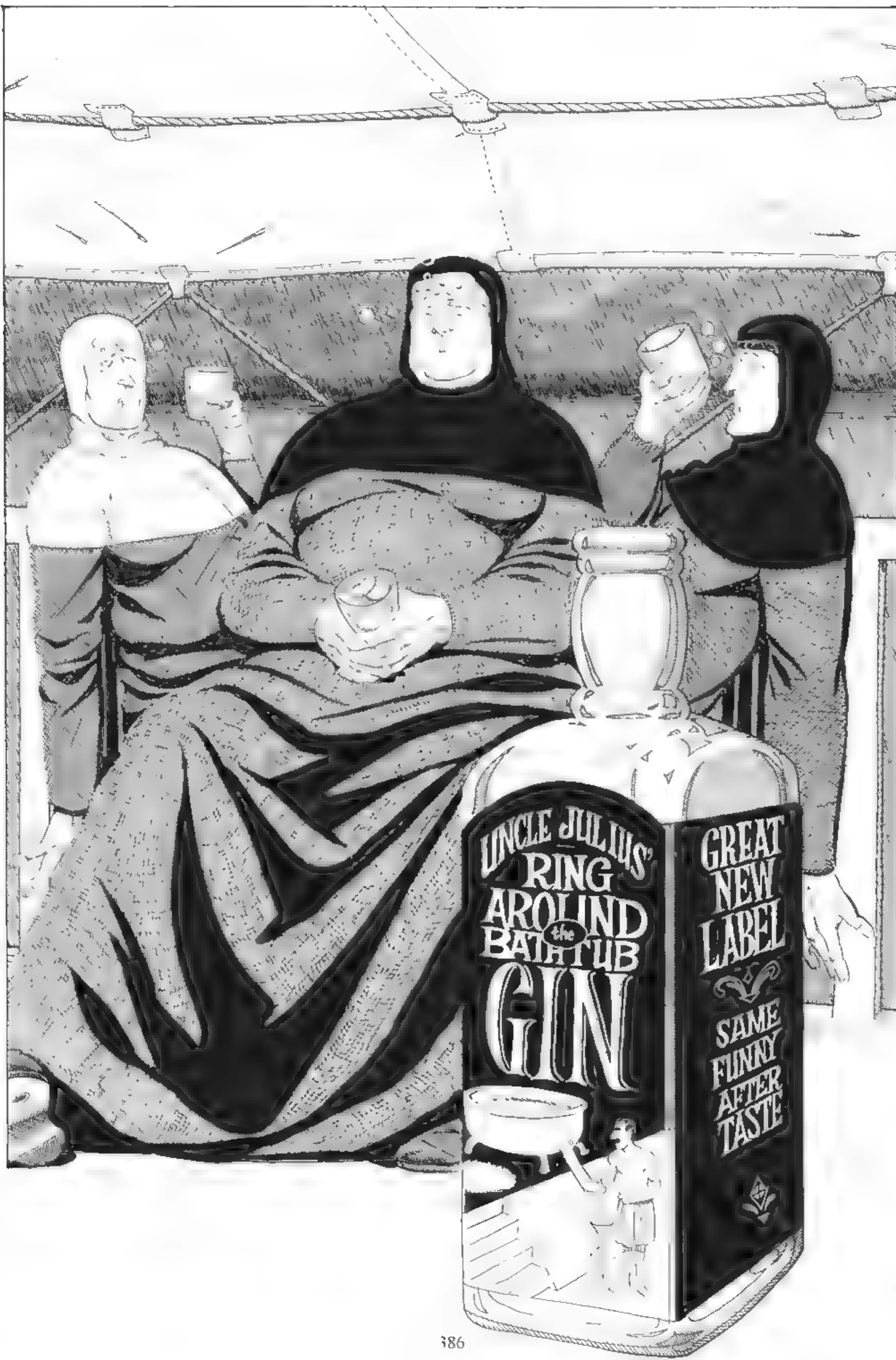
Ginevra's single flaw—if it can be accurately described as such—was not that she had doubted but, rather, that she had believed.

The exquisite perfection of her gaiety, the delicacy of her attentiveness, the inexhaustibility of her contentment—were her gifts to Jozan, his alone—that was all. And if, before Ginevra yielded up her gift of beauty she shed one bright feather of light so that Jay Anthony Diver, gazing up from the grey earth might say, “Look! There is an angel's wing!” perhaps she had given more than enough in exchange for her human joys.

...The story ends here.







# CHASING SCOTT





## CHASING SCOTT

As Alan Moore rather famously (to me, anyway) remarked in answer to my praise of his "meticulous appendices" to *From Hell* and his self-deprecating tone.

*As regards my self-deprecating tone during the appendices, it wasn't any kind of modesty so much as a gruff attempt at apology for having done such a fucking sloppy and unprofessional job. I mean, 'I think I read this in some book somewhere, but I can't be bothered to look for it' is hardly the high standard of investigative reportage that From Hell is often touted as being, is it?*

The reader of these notes stands warned that "Chasing Scott" will adopt exactly this kind of "sloppy and unprofessional" approach to the year or so of research that I have devoted to creating my fictional F. Scott Fitzgerald. Inclined as I am to make apologies both for myself and Alan (and for any future comics creator who chooses to annotate his or her own work in this way), ours is not—I don't think—the ordered and meticulous mind of the "scholar squirrel," as Gore Vidal described the pre-eminent Fitzgerald biographer, Matthew J. Bruccoli, in his devastatingly witty review of *The Correspondence of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, edited by Mr. Bruccoli.

Anyone researching the life of F. Scott Fitzgerald, one way or another, is going to owe a considerable debt to Professor Bruccoli. While I disagree with many of his conclusions, inferences, and implications, his *factual* research is without rival or peer, and he has expended so much time and energy in making his factual research widely available that (if nothing else) he has single-handedly raised all debate about Fitzgerald (and the relationship of Scott and Zelda) to a more informed level by his prodigious efforts. If his enthusiasm for Fitzgerald—man and author—crosses thresholds of reason in the view of Gore Vidal...

...But I'm getting ahead of myself

Page 167 - "Fall and the River" is almost a direct steal of the title of one of Tom Wolfe's books, *Of Time and the River*. Wolfe, along with Fitzgerald and Hemingway, was one of Scribners' trio of major authors under the editorship of Max Perkins (Fitzgerald was the first). Since "Fall and the River" has been developed with the express intention of "pushing the envelope" of what constitutes plagiarism, tribute, satire, and parody, this seemed a good way to begin

Page 168 - The Groucho Marx quotes are from Sheila Graham's *The Real F. Scott Fitzgerald*. I went to the library this morning to check her attribution. Not only was the book not there, but it has vanished from the

Kitchener Public Library system. More on this in a moment.

According to Matthew J. Bruccoli's *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur: The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, in 1927 the Fitzgeralds (that is, Scott's money) rented a small house at 6 Gateway Drive in Great Neck, Long Island "...about fifteen miles from the city, on the Long Island Sound side or North Shore of Long Island..." and the area was favoured by "show business types." Bruccoli's list of residents includes Ed Wynn, Eddie Cantor, Herbert Bayard Swope, Tom Miegahan, Gene Buck, and Lew Fields. The absence of Groucho Marx's name from the list would indicate to me that he and Scott did not travel in the same liquor-sodden Roaring Twenties Great Neck circles, so I'm really stretching a point in describing Scott as Groucho's "Great Neck, Long Island neighbour." I succumbed to the temptation for the added resonance it provided in Jaka's recollection of F. Stop and Gloria being at one of Lord Julius' parties.

As diplomatically as possible, I'll point out that Sheila Graham—the Hollywood gossip columnist with whom Fitzgerald was cohabitating at the time of his death—is the only one of Fitzgerald's biographers who considers Sheila Graham's importance in his life to have been dramatically underrated. She wrote three books about their "life" together: *Beloved Infidel* (which was, evidently, made into a movie which I look forward to seeing in exactly the same spirit in which I looked forward to seeing the original Ed Wood Jr "classic" *Plan 9 From Outer Space*); *College of One* (New York: Viking, 1967, for all you scholar squirrels), which was concerned with Scott's curriculum of classic reading materials intended to "bring her up to speed" so that they could at least pretend to converse (in my opinion, Scott's reference in his notebooks that "You can usually scare a certain amount of brains into a woman but usually you can't make them stick" was written around this time), and the aforementioned and now MIA *The Real F. Scott Fitzgerald*. Really wish I had it, because the sub-heading was something along the lines of "The definitive biography of Fitzgerald written by the woman who knew him best," which I thought must have had the badly charred remains of Zelda pinwheeling in her St. Mary's grave. (Mr. Chris Howard of *Dressed for Success* sent me a used copy of the book which arrived the same morning as the final proofreading for these notes. The cover copy reads: "A mature and revealing appraisal of a brilliant writer by the woman who knew him best." And they say there's no good comedy anymore.)

In the 1970s, Sheila Graham wrote *How to Marry Super-Rich: Love, Money and the Morning After*, to which, for obvious reasons, I see no need to add any further observation.

Page 169 - Depicting F. Stop Kennedy proved something of a challenge since very few pictures of Fitzgerald exist—and those that do seldom look like they are taken of the same person. I decided to use Carl Van Vechten's two pictures taken in Encino, California, 4 June 1937 (Yale University Library) as a "jumping-off" point, but (the artistically inclined reader-viewer is warned) I didn't really feel that I had gotten close to the Scott Fitzgerald I picture in my head until F. Stop reseated himself after pulling Cerebus' chair out for him.

In the background, Aline Kominsky-Crumb and "the Soph" lead Robert Crumb by the hand to their new life in Mealc, Estarcion's version of the south of France. Any analogies to be drawn between this and Scott and Zelda ending up in the south of France in the early twenties are left up to the reader-viewer's own discretion (or lack of same).

Page 170 - All of the text pieces contained in "Fall and the River" are modelled, both visually and in terms of content, on F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* (Scribners, 1922). The title of F. Stop Kennedy's book, *Pleasure's Simple Life*, I ran across in one of my old notebooks that I was flipping through. "Pleasure's Simple Lives" was all it said. I have no recollection of writing it, but I was certainly pleased to run across it at such an opportune moment. The typeface is Footlight Light, which is not an exact match but is pretty darn close. This first text piece is also the exact size of the text in *The Beautiful and Damned*'s original printing. All subsequent pieces are slightly taller to fit the more elongated traditional comic-book page.

All of the writing on this text piece is my own, and the finished piece is, I believe, "take twelve." I tried to imitate Scott Fitzgerald's own tendency to overwrite and rewrite extensively, which is a very perilous business, writing-wise. The trick is to try to put a fine polish on every phrase without losing the original sense and spontaneity of expression. In the early going, I only worked on the text pieces on Saturdays when I was severely hung over from alcoholic overindulgence on my Friday night "sprees." I assume that Scott wrote most of his stuff hung over, so I thought I'd give it a try in the interests of authenticity. It was not a lot of fun.

F. Stop Kennedy's fictionalized name, Jay Anthony Diver, is a mixing of three Fitzgerald male "leads" from his novels: Jay Gatsby (*The Great Gatsby*), Anthony Patch (*The Beautiful and Damned*), and Dick Diver (*Tender is the Night*).

Page 172 - The name "F. Stop Kennedy" came to me pretty early in the proceedings—which is to say in late 1997. It tended to elicit a small chuckle from those few confidants I bored senseless with my "Scott-talk" (George and James, specifically, in the early months). By the time the Monica Lewinsky "scandal" was really rolling, it was getting genuine belly laughs (from the men, anyway).

Curiously, I ran across this in *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur* when I was looking up the Great Neck material (pg. 263, scholar squirrels):

*The year 1927 brought a series of nervous ailments, which may be what Fitzgerald was referring to in three puzzling Ledger notes for August-September: "Terrible incessant stoppies begin"; "Stoppies worse"; "Stoppies now reached its height."*

Strange, eh?

So far as I know, Norman Mailer (as usual) was the first to recognize some zeitgeist connection between Scott Fitzgerald and John F. Kennedy in his *Esquire* article "Superman Comes to Supermarket," written during the 1960 Presidential Campaign and reprinted in Mailer's *The Presidential Papers* (G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1963). In describing the demonstrations on the floor of the Democratic Convention in Los Angeles, Mailer wrote:

*Besides, the personnel had something of the Kennedy élan, those paper hats designed to look like straw boaters with Kennedy's face on the crown, and small photographs of him on the ribbon, those hats which had come to symbolize the crack speed of the Kennedy team, that Madison Avenue cachet which one finds in bars like P. J. Clarke's, the elegance always giving its subtle echo of the Twenties so that the racoon coats seem more numerous than their real count, and the coloured waistcoats are measured by the charm they would have drawn from Scott Fitzgerald's eye. But there, it occurred to one for the first time that Kennedy's middle name was just that, Fitzgerald, and the tone of his crack lieutenants, the unstated style, was true to Scott. The legend of Fitzgerald had an army at last, formed around the self-image in the mind of every superior Madison Avenue opportunist that he was hard, he was young, he was in, his conversation was lean as wit, and if the work was not always scrupulous, well, the style could aspire. If there came a good day...he could meet the occasion.*

Extremely prescient (of course, saying that about Mailer is something of a redundancy) in light of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.

I would speculate that—as a young man at Harvard—John F. Kennedy (who was more of a Hemingway fan) would've been aware of Fitzgerald's work. Fitzgerald dreamt of being a war hero and an aristocrat—or the degraded American version: extremely wealthy—both of which JFK could put little mental tick marks next to before he was thirty years old.

Page 174 - F. Stop Kennedy's wife's name, Gloria, is taken from the name of the female "lead" in *The Beautiful and Damned*, Gloria Patch, née Gilbert. This anecd-



dote is related in several of the books that I read and constitutes one of the crazier examples of Scott and Zelda's crazy behaviour at the height of their notoriety. It took place at Lois Moran's house—about whom more will be said later on. Scott and Zelda were very aware that their success was bound up with their notoriety, and my best guess would be that their philosophy in the early twenties was that “any publicity is good publicity,” “as long as they spelled the names right,” etc. For sheer “nuttness,” I think it is rivalled only by the legend that, disappointed in their first trip to Hollywood (Scott's film treatment—called *Lipstick*—had been rejected), they piled all of the furniture up in the middle of their hotel room, placed their unpaid hotel bills on top, and left. The hotel (odd bit of synchronicity) was the Ambassador in Los Angeles, where Robert Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe, by some accounts, passed a few fervid afternoons and where the Senator was shot in 1968. Again, more on this later..

Page 176 - *Cerebus* scholar squirrels who are interested in reading an unobstructed version of this text piece fragment (it was written only to the point where it disappeared behind F. Stop Kennedy's right shoulder) are welcome to search out a copy of *Cerebus* 240 (March 1999) where it appeared on the inside front cover

Page 177 - Jay Anthony Diver's wife's name, Xena, is taken from a late-20th-century television show, *Xena, Warrior Princess* (about which the less said the better, in my view). F. Stop Kennedy's fictionalized name for Jaka, Ginevra, has as its point of origin Ginevra King, a Lake Forest, Illinois beauty and debutante who was F. Scott Fitzgerald's first choice in his search for the “best girl” (whatever that means). Even in the last few years of his life, Fitzgerald was still nursing the wound of her rejection. In his daily ledger he wrote, “Taking things hard, from Ginevra to Manciewicz” (Joseph Manciewicz, the producer, had rewritten Fitzgerald's *Three Comrades* script, on the set).

This text piece, again, is all me, trying to capture Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* voice. The reference to “gold-hatted gadflies” in the first paragraph is a “too cute for words” tribute to one of Scott Fitzgerald's alternate titles for *The Great Gatsby*: Gold-Hatted Gatsby

Ginevra King. “Gin Every King”? It's probably just me Never Mind

Page 185 - P. Craig Russell is a comic-book writer/artist and also a sometime commercial illustrator. He is best known for his comic-book adaptations of Oscar Wilde's fairy tales (NBM Publishing, New York) several of which are mentioned by name on...

Page 186 - ...including *The Selfish Giant* and *The Star Child* (vol. 1: ISBN 1-56163-056-X), *The Young King* and *The Remarkable Rocket* (vol. 2: ISBN 1-56163-085-3), and *The Birthday of the Infanta* (vol. 3: ISBN 1-

56163-213-9). One of Craig's earliest solo works was *Night Music I*, published by the defunct Eclipse Publishing in the early 1980s and consisting of a long science-fiction story and a number of story fragments. Unlike F. Stop and Jaka, my personal favourite is “La Sonnambula and the City of Sleep” among the *Night Music* fragments. When Gerhard read my completed part of page 185, he said, enthusiastically, “We get to do P. Craig Russell pictures?” Since that hadn't been my intention, I selected a panel from “Therimbula and the Sea,” which was all background with one little figure in the corner. “Me and my big mouth,” quoth Gerhard when I showed him my completed part of page 186. “La Sonnambula and the City of Sleep” is almost all figures, which explains the disparity in preferences between myself and F. Stop Kennedy and Jaka (and Ger, as well, I'd imagine).

Apart from the fact that Oscar Wilde made his first appearance in *Cerebus* 120 and Scott Fitzgerald in *Cerebus* 240 (a strange symmetrical accident), there are a number of real-world connections between the two. From Fitzgerald's first novel, written in and around the time he had been inducted into the army and centering on his college days at Princeton (*This Side of Paradise*, 1920):

*Tom D'Invilliers became at first an occasion rather than a friend. Amory [Blaine, the Fitzgerald stand-in in Paradise] saw him about once a week, and together they gilded the ceiling of Tom's room and decorated the walls with imitation tapestry, bought at an auction, tall candlesticks and figured curtains. Amory liked him for being clever and literary without effeminacy or affectation. In fact, Amory did most of the strutting and tried painfully to make every remark an epigram which, if one is content with ostensible epigrams, there are many feats harder [I think that should be “discontent” and “many feats easier”—This Side of Paradise is rife with such inconsistencies]. 12 Univee was amused. Kerry read “Dorian Gray” and simulated Lord Henry, following Amory about, addressing him as “Dorian” and pretending to encourage in him wicked fancies and attenuated tendencies to ennui. When he carried it into commons, to the amazement of the others at table, Amory became furiously embarrassed, and after that made epigrams only before D'Invilliers or a convenient mirror*

Having “worked with” Oscar Wilde in *Jaka's Story* and *Melmoth*, this definitely attracted my attention. I assume that Scott was documenting (however thinly veiled) an actual situation he experienced at Princeton. So far as I know, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and all of Wilde's other works, as well as writings about Wilde, went “underground” after the trial and imprisonment in 1895. It was approximately two decades after that that Scott Fitzgerald was at Princeton, so I'm assuming that Wilde and his works “resurfaced” first in the academic



environment—probably with a healthy dose of “illicit allure” attached to them, which, given the actual content of *Dorian Gray*, certainly wouldn’t hurt their appeal for your average college freshman wanting to be a jaded “man of the world.”

Was Scott Fitzgerald a closet gay? From my research, this notion seems to have become something of a *cause célèbre* in the early 1970s, right around the time that feminism was hitting the headlines in a big way. No big surprise there, as far as I’m concerned. The feminists quickly adopted Zelda as a brilliant artist oppressed by a domineering husband, and latent homosexuality is never far behind once the former gauntlet has been thrown down.

My own view is that Scott was “a little light in the loafers,” but that that was more the result of his never quite growing up, in any meaningful sense of the term. Basically, it seems to me, he went from being a little boy to being “a sick old man” (as Groucho Marx put it), with no real stops in between (from Fitzgerald’s *Notebooks*: “Something in his nature never got over things, never accepted his sudden rise to fame, because *all the steps weren’t there*” — italics mine). All of his excesses of behaviour were really very childlike excesses: jumping fully clothed into the fountain outside the Plaza hotel, riding through New York on top of a taxicab, making purses and wallets and tomato sauce into a stew, piling all the furniture in his hotel in the middle of the room and putting his unpaid bills on top. This is not sophomoric behaviour, this is not adolescent behaviour; to me, this is *infantile* behaviour. And I believe he responded to *Dorian Gray* in the same way: as play-acting and dress-up (assuming that the early description in *The Beautiful and Damned* of Anthony Patch with his “too elegant” robes and ties he would only wear around his apartment is autobiographical—and I’m assuming it is—the “dress-up” aspect shouldn’t be overlooked).

Still, in this Androgynous Age, there is greater peril in being perceived to gloss over such a point than to assume the risk of belabouring it. So, by way of belabouring the point:

#### VIDAL ON SCOTT

The piece first appeared in the *New York Review of Books* (May 1, 1980) and is entitled “F. Scott Fitzgerald’s Case.” It was reprinted in a collection of Gore Vidal essays, *The Second American Revolution and Other Essays (1976-1982)* (Random House, New York, 1982), and addresses itself to *The Notebooks of F. Scott Fitzgerald* and *The Correspondence of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (both edited by the ubiquitous Professor Matthew J. Bruccoli—he’s written and/or edited twelve books about Fitzgerald).

As a great admirer of Gore Vidal’s intimidating intellect, I would have to call it vintage Vidal. The first four pages encapsulate Fitzgerald’s career and confine themselves to the administering of a few tactical flesh wounds and the flexing of literary muscle. Preliminaries

and warm-up dispensed with, Vidal makes the dry-as-dust observation that *Notebooks* comes “highly recommended.” James Dickey, poet and novelist, is quoted (from the back cover blurbs or advertisements, would be my guess) as being of the opinion: “...they (*Notebooks of F. Scott Fitzgerald*) should be a bible for all writers. But one does not have to be a writer to respond to them—these notebooks make writers of us all.” Vidal goes from dry to withering:

*If true, this is indeed a breakthrough. Why go to Bread Loaf when you, too, can earn good money and get tenure by reading a single book?*

Ouch

Budd Schulberg’s quote places Fitzgerald with “the notebook masters, beyond Butler, Bennett, even Jules Renaud...” Vidal appends a “(sic)” to the latter name and then appends a few extraneous sentences, but after the “(sic)” all is, of course, anticlimax. Professor Bruccoli’s Literary Praetorian Guard limps from the field, haemorrhaging credibility.

I’ll spare the sensitive and the too-curious reader a blow-by-blow description of the ensuing literary blood-bath and skip forward to the point where Vidal prepares to administer the *coup de grâce* to the effectively sliced-and-diced Professor, beginning with Bruccoli’s own observation that Fitzgerald is “the most fully documented American author of this century. We know more about Fitzgerald than about any of his contemporaries because he preserved the material. . . The best Fitzgerald scholar of us was F. Scott Fitzgerald.” Vidal closes in for the kill.

*Typing out these words I have a sense of perfect madness. Scholar of Fitzgerald? One sees the need for scholars of Dante, Rabelais, Shakespeare. But scholar of a contemporary popular writer who needs no introduction? Isn’t this all a bit out of proportion? Are the academic mills now so huge and mindless that any writer of moderate talent and notoriety is grist?*

Now, this was extremely helpful to me when I read it after eight months of researching Fitzgerald (and it had been there the whole time in my own very modest “library”). Fitzgerald’s biographers *do* tend toward excessive uncritical and sycophantic adulation. To have someone whose intellect I greatly admire (Vidal is second only to Mailer in representation in my “library”) adopting a dissenting view assisted me in gaining a more...proportionate?...perspective on Fitzgerald’s work, which had been somewhat skewed by my absorption in the subject.

Idle speculation: I think at least in part Vidal was taking offense as a more productive, more diligent, and (possibly) more gifted writer—as a writer, in short, more worthy of such scholarship than Fitzgerald, with his handful of thin novels. Of course, by the

rules of the game, Vidal was not allowed to say that directly, but if that was, in part, his underlying thesis, I can't help but agree. It's all personal opinion, but I would stack up the last chapter (and particularly the last two pages) of Vidal's *The Judgement of Paris* very favourably against anything that I've read in the English language.

However, the subject was roses. Or, to put it more offensively, pansies.

And here, at least for myself, I have to separate Vidal the gifted writer from Vidal the homosexualist (Vidal made the excellent point some years ago that homosexual is an adjective, not a noun). Or, as Scott Fitzgerald referred to them not infrequently in his *Notebooks* and less frequently in his novels, "fairies." From Vidal's review:

*In these Notebooks Fitzgerald makes rather too many nervous references to fairies and pansies. But then his attitudes towards the lesser breeds were very much those of everyone else in those days: "[Notebook reference number] 1719 the gibbering dingies on the sidewalks; 1921 Arthur Kober type of Jew without softness...trying to realize himself outside of Jewry; 1974 Native Son—a well-written penny dreadful with the apparent moral that it is a good thing for the cause when a feeble-minded negro runs amuck."*

In a literary court of law, I would characterize "nervous references" as highly speculative. If Scott Fitzgerald was, indeed, a closet gay, then the observation would be accurate. If Scott was hetero through and through, I would assume that the references weren't so much nervous as irritable (with undertones of heterosexual disgust). Speaking from a masculine heterosexualist vantage point, I think the other five "genders" (female heterosexualist, female bisexualist, lesbian, gay male, and gay bisexualist) make this error of perception with disconcerting regularity: seeing nervousness and fear where all is irritation (with undertones of disgust) and, among the less civilized of my persuasion (among whose number I do not, decidedly, count myself), anger (with violent and sometimes homicidal overtones and actions). It is why, I think, the crossing of thresholds from "tolerance" ("As long as they don't do it in the streets and scare the horses") to public "celebration" (Gay Pride parades) tends to strike such a sour note with the masculine heterosexualist societal minority (I'm not sure that the five other "genders" actually constitute a majority, but for all intents and purposes I think I can let that one stand). The subsequent *Notebook* references, to me, are just exercises in consensus building: if the five other genders can just co-opt the (mythical?) outrage of all Jews and all blacks to such dated references, we should be able to cast this WIC (White, Irish-Catholic) bigot out of the right-thinking global village. Where one goes when one is cast out of the right-thinking global village is, perhaps, a discussion for another time and place. Of course, I'm not including in the five principal other "genders" transsexu-

als, the transsexually inclined, tomboy heterosexualists, transvestites, or perhaps the only pinpoint minority really relevant to the discussion: genuine hermaphrodites.

To me, it really does constitute a matter of vantage point. As a confirmed heterosexualist I take no offense at Gore Vidal's line of argument. One builds one's consenses where one will, if one is of a mind to do so. But I think they are inaccurate, owing to Vidal's vantage point. There are flat assertions: "There are very few youths as handsome as Fitzgerald who go unseduced by men or boys in the sort of schools that he attended." I'm sure this is received wisdom in the homosexualist ranks, but I would speculate that (human nature being what it is) their statistics tend to be...ego-inflated? Likewise when Vidal quotes a letter Scott may (or may not) have sent to Zelda: "The nearest I ever came to leaving you was when you told me you (thought) that I was a fairy in the Rue Palatine..." Vidal snickers (and I admit I did as well): "The answer to that one is, stay away from the Rue Palatine." Of course, I snickered at the phraseology, having no heterosexualist idea that the Rue Palatine was pregnant with meaning, except through Vidal's wonderfully droll implication.

Just to drag Oscar Wilde back into the proceedings for a moment, let me quote him from his second trial (fourth day, Tuesday, April 30th, 1895 from *The Trials of Oscar Wilde*, William Hodge and Company, London, 1948, scholar squirrels), where Mr. C. F. Gill, on cross-examination, has asked about "the love that dare not speak its name":

*What is the "Love that dare not speak its name"?— "The Love that dare not speak its name" in this century is such a great affection of an elder for a younger man as there was between David and Jonathan, such as Plato made the very basis of his philosophy, and such as you find in the sonnets of Michelangelo and Shakespeare. It is that deep, spiritual affection that is as pure as it is perfect. It dictates and pervades great works of art like those of Shakespeare and Michelangelo, and those two letters of mine, such as they are. It is in this century misunderstood, so much misunderstood that it may be described as the "Love that dare not speak its name," and on account of it I am placed where I am now. It is beautiful, it is fine, it is the noblest form of affection. There is nothing unnatural about it. It is intellectual, and it repeatedly exists between an elder and a younger man, when the elder man has intellect, and the younger man has all the joy, hope, and glamour of life before him. That it should be so the world does not understand. The world mocks at it and sometimes puts one in the pillory for it.*

An eloquent monologue to be sure, but (personally) I see nothing "beautiful," "fine," or "the noblest form of affection" in being masturbated by East End hoodlums in Kettner's private rooms, over champagne and pheasant. And I think there was at one time genuine love between



men which became indistinguishable from such sordid shenanigans as a direct result of Wilde's debacle and that Scott was justified in his Notebooks in observing ruefully, "I really loved him, but of course it wore out like a love affair. The fairies have spoiled all that."

If heterosexualist disgust with homosexualist acts is to remain within the realm and confines of tolerance—and what else is tolerance but restraining one's self from verbal or physical abuse of those whose actions and behaviours one finds disgusting?—then it seems to me that reciprocal restraint might be beneficial in the ranks of the multiple "genders" opposite and that the impugning of "repressed homosexuality" and "latent homosexuality" and "homophobia" might be retired from popular usage, and masculine heterosexuality tolerated and accepted at face value for what it is: masculine heterosexuality.

Anyway, that concludes my extensive belabouring of the point. Speaking as the author of this creative work, and leaving aside what inclinations and proclivities Scott Fitzgerald was subject to and/or possessed (which only Scott knew and which were only Scott's business to know), the reader can rest assured that F. Stop Kennedy is a confirmed heterosexualist, born and bred

Page 187 - Just as I was preparing to write F. Stop's speculations on Jaka and Cerebus's conversation in their stateroom—contrasting it with what they were actually saying to each other—I ran across a page from *The Beautiful and Damned* (page 21), which I had photocopied as an example of Scott Fitzgerald's script format. I don't know if Fitzgerald pioneered this—incorporating the "play script" format into the prose novel. Offhand, I can't think of anyone else who used it before or since. It jumped out at me because (so far as I know) I *did* pioneer its use in the comic-book medium, I suspect for the same reason Fitzgerald did: it's a neat solution to a section of a story which is dialogue-driven and requires little or no "scene-setting" to get its point across. [One of my readers, Mr. Seb Parker of New Britain, CT, wrote to tell me, during the serialization of "Fall and the River," that the "play script" format was actually pioneered by Herman Melville in *Moby Dick*, specifically in Chapter 40.] Coincidentally, the page that I had photocopied as a format reference turned out to be the dialogue between Anthony Patch and Maury Noble as they're waiting for their "writer friend" Dick Caramel to join them at a restaurant. Writerly vanity being what it is, Anthony and Maury do nothing but discuss Dick and his writing prior to his arrival. By juxtaposing Jaka and Cerebus's dialogue with the Ginevra/Jozan dialogue, I thought I'd introduce my own speculation: that No One discusses writers and their work except in the imagination of writers—and that writers are only discussed by non-writers in very mundane and human terms. The Jozan/Ginevra dialogue is actually a parody of page 21 of *The Beautiful and Damned*—except for "(Still considering his own last observation)" which, apart from switching pronoun gender, I stole outright from page 21. I consider it an example of Fitzgerald's brilliant insights into how people

actually converse. "Still considering his own last observation." Now, *that's* Writing.

F. Stop Kennedy's fictionalized name for Cerebus, Jozan, has as its origin Edouard Jozan, a French military chap to whom Zelda took quite a fancy in 1931 when the Fitzgeralds were staying at the Ville Marie in Fréjus, France. He was fictionalized by Scott Fitzgerald as Tommy Barban in *Tender is the Night* (Scribners, 1933) and by Zelda as Lieutenant Jacques Chèvre-Feuille in *Save Me The Waltz* (Scribners, 1932). Zelda's biographers—mostly women—inevitably translate the latter name as "honeysuckle," which, according to my French-English dictionary, it certainly is—when unhyphenated. As two separate words it translates more provocatively into "she-goat" and "1. leaf (of a plant), 2. (newspaper) rag, 3. sheet (of paper)." I suspect that Zelda—who is the best woman writer I've ever read—was not unmindful of the distinction. I'm going to go with "sheet (of paper.)"

Jozan, after his run-in with the Fitzgeralds, went on to a distinguished military career in the French navy, a decorated war hero who took part in the Dunkirk evacuation in World War II and saw duty in the Far East, and retired a vice-admiral. Nancy Milford located him for her 1970 biography, *Zelda*. In answer to written questions, he denied that there had been an affair between him and Zelda, described Scott Fitzgerald as a bit of an intellectual, more sophisticated than any man he had ever met, and Zelda as extremely attractive, but not a complicated woman. In describing the Fitzgeralds' relationship, he wrote that "...they both had a need of drama; they made it up and perhaps they were victims of their own unsettled and a little unhealthy imagination." Zelda's friend Sara Mayfield interviewed Jozan for her *Zelda* biography, *Exiles from Paradise* (Delacorte Press, New York, 1971), and came (not surprisingly) to the conclusion that the "affair" was just as Zelda described it in *Save Me The Waltz*: a summer flirtation, "romantic, decorous, and slightly comic." Times being what they are, I suppose I'll just have to leave aside all questions of whether any of those adjectives are appropriate to a married woman having a summer flirtation with anyone other than her husband.

In my copy of *Save Me The Waltz* (Zelda Fitzgerald: *The Collected Writings*, edited by—you guessed it, scholar squirrels—Matthew J. Bruccoli, Colliers, New York, 1992), Lieutenant She-Goat Sheet walks in on page 81 and walks right back out again on page 95. Seven "she-goat sheets" by my reckoning. From *Save Me The Waltz*: "Do you think he actually *is* a god?" Alabama (Zelda) whispered to David (Scott). "He looks like you—except that he is full of the sun, whereas you are a moon person." If Zelda did say anything of this kind to Scott, I think that moves the whole enterprise out of the realm of the "decorous and slightly comic" and moves the "romantic" end of things past dangerous thresholds.

By contrast, Tommy Barban is all over the place in *Tender is the Night*, fighting a "duel of honour" with



McKisco when McKisco's wife implies that something scandalous has taken place in Dick and Nicole Diver's house, ultimately declaring his love for Nicole and hers for him, and forcing a confrontation which leads to Dick and Nicole's divorce and Tommy and Nicole's subsequent marriage.

My own view, after a year's research touching tangentially on this nonsense, is that both "documentations" are correct or have a certain validity. I think Zelda, jealous as ever of the amount of time Scott devoted to his writing, crossed a boundary in the interest of getting a rise out of Scott to feed her own ego (having much in common with "accidentally" sending Scott a picture of herself—signed to professional golfer Bobby London—when Scott was vacillating on setting a wedding date. Zelda's henhouse biographers even tracked down Bobby London to find out if he had ever met her. He hadn't, of course). When the time she spent with Edouard Jozan—like the time she spent in the company of other men while Scott was working—failed to distract Scott's attentions from his work to her, she simply magnified her "romantic, decorous, and slightly comic" flirtation into something more threatening. I believe that she told Scott that she and Edouard were in love and that she wanted a divorce. Oops, as they say. At that point, womanly vanity being what it is, there was no way out. Scott, like Dick Diver in *Tender*, insisted on a face-to-face meeting with Jozan to settle the business "like gentlemen" and jumped to the conclusion that he and Jozan might have to fight a duel, both of which—having triggered the emotional extremes which were the foundation of Fitzgerald's writing—found their way into *Tender is the Night*. Zelda, I believe, "chose" to stay with Scott (it was at least easier than trying to explain to Edouard Jozan in broken French that he—Edouard—was in love with Zelda and they were going to get married—which would have come as quite a shock to old She-Goat Sheet, I'm sure) and hope the whole thing would just blow over in time. It didn't.

As Hemingway first heard the story from Scott, Zelda had fallen in love with another man. Later, Hemingway drily noted, there were other versions, including one where Scott and Jozan had fought a duel (similar to the one in *Tender is the Night*), but he found the first explanation the most affecting. That Zelda had fallen in love with another man.

Amazing that Scott turned in his essay, "How to Live on Practically Nothing a Year," on time through the course of the "Jozan episode." The names Ginevra and Jozan have no such pregnant meaning for F. Stop Kennedy, but I thought I'd share all this with those of you who are interested.

Page 189 - All of the excerpts from F. Stop Kennedy's notebooks are taken from Scott Fitzgerald's *Notebooks*, usually word for word. Plagiarism, to be sure, but I

chose that course at least partly in reaction to Gore Vidal's deprecation of the material in his above-mentioned review. Vidal found only one entry worthy of Jules Renard—"In order to bring on the revolution it may be necessary to work inside the Communist party"—and found very little to recommend them apart from that.

Some of the entries fall a little flat, but I definitely found—and continue to find—a rich treasure trove of Scott Fitzgerald at his best, including those I appropriated—that is, stole—for "Fall and the River." Of course, I have a tenth printing of the New Directions paperback *The Crack-Up*, edited by Edmund "Bunny" Wilson\* and first published after Fitzgerald's death, where the notebook excerpts are presented with "entries which were of value to Fitzgerald as suggestions or reminders for his work, but which seem otherwise unintelligible or uninteresting" weeded out. Such was obviously not the case with the exhaustive Matthew J. Bruccoli-edited *Notebooks of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, which Vidal was reviewing and which included such entries as 375 *Let's all live together*; 1270 *Actors the clue to much*; 1443 *The rejection slips*; and so on—which, pretty clearly, fall well short of Jules Renard, Samuel Butler, et al.

It is speculative on my part that each of the notebook entries reflects Scott's mood at the time he wrote them, but...well, that's my best speculation. It is also highly speculative on my part that Fitzgerald wrote these notebook entries in small batches. A certain amount of compression and distillation is required—especially in the comic-book medium—so, while I don't apologize for taking liberties, I did want to alert the reader to the fact that I am, quite possibly, taking liberties here.

Page 190 - I write all the time, especially while doing something mundane like shaving or doing the dishes. So, F. Stop Kennedy does too.

Page 191 - F. Stop's ensemble is taken from a photo of Fitzgerald taken by Belle O'Hara in Hollywood sometime after December 1936 (when she married novelist John O'Hara, who, apart from writing *Butterfield 8*, *Pal Joey*, *A Rage to Live*, and other novels which weren't made into movies, was very much a devoted fan of Fitzgerald and his writing, as I found in browsing through O'Hara's collected letters edited by—you guessed it, scholar squirrels—Matthew J. Bruccoli). In the photo, Scott Fitzgerald looks—disconcertingly—like former U.S. President George Bush. I'm sure it all has nothing to do with Fitzgerald's notebook entry "Impersonating 46 different presidents at once," nor with President Bush's declaration while in office, "I really hate Bruccoli"—er, "broccoli." Actually, I'm not sure at all, but better safe than sorry.

Page 193 - I changed Fitzgerald's "the thirties" and "the forties" to "our thirties" and "our forties." Born in 1896,

\* Not to be confused with "Bunny" Wilson, the Australian cartoonist, best known for illustrating the "Sea Monkeys" advertisement used in many comic book circa 1960.

Fitzgerald could justifiably confuse the decade with his age, being in his twenties through most of the twenties, his thirties through most of the thirties. I disagree with the sentiment expressed, only insofar as the whole thing seems to hinge on the verb "save." Love is love and friends are friends. Those things which have the potential to "save" the individual exist, to me, on a much higher plane of existence

Page 194 - Fitzgerald's legendary insomnia which he expressed most thoroughly in his *Esquire* essay "Sleeping and Waking" (December 1934) and most concisely in his essay "Handle with Care" (*Esquire*, March 1936)

*...in a real dark night of the soul it is always three o'clock in the morning, day after day.*

Page 195 - From "Handle with Care," referring to Ernest Hemingway (without naming him):

*...a third contemporary had been an artistic conscience to me—I had not imitated his infectious style, because my own style, such as it is, was formed before he published anything, but there was an awful pull toward him when I was on a spot.*

I suspect that "Our fathers died. Suddenly in the night they died and in the morning we knew" is Fitzgerald "doing" Hemingway. It has the same word rhythm as one of Fitzgerald's favourite Hemingway lines (which he enthused about in a couple of letters to "Papa"), which opens "In Another Country":

*In the fall the war was always there, but we did not go to it anymore.*

This is also my attempt to imitate Fitzgerald's handwriting. I'd say I didn't do a bad job, but it wouldn't fool Matthew J. Bruccoli for a second. One of the things that makes Fitzgerald's handwriting so hard to read is that his u's look like n's and his n's look like u's. The "pencil" effect (Fitzgerald wrote mostly in pencil) was achieved by photocopying the inked handwriting through tracing paper on a very light setting.

Page 196 - It is also speculative that he "gave up on this one," but that's the way I read it. Very, very funny to me. I was very glad that I had my own comedy duo to substitute for "Laurel and Hardy" in Fitzgerald's original piece

Page 197 - In the original for the "Hawthorne boys" epigram, "boy" is singular and the rest is plural, so, by majority rule, I changed "boy" to "boys" so the extract made sense. The actual name (in my New Directions paperback edition) was replaced by asterisks, indicating that it referred to an actual person whose name had been deleted—standard procedure with Notebooks and Collected Letters in the literary world, to avoid lawsuits and such

So I have no idea who the "boy" in question was. I used Hawthorne because that was the name of some fellow the Kitchener Police arrested at the library while I was doing research. "Mr. Hawthorne? Come with us, please."

Page 200 - This was my first attempt at a text piece using Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* "voice" incorporating "Ginevra" and "Jozan" into the conversation. I intended it as a tryout, and then the whole thing just arrived on the page, pretty much as you see it here. "Xena. Xena. How is Xena?" is patterned on a similar observation of Scott's which concludes "Zelda. Zelda. How is Zelda?" For the life of me, I can't find it anywhere. Sorry, scholar squirrels, I let you down.

Page 201 - Ginevra's observation about the wives of Fitzgerald's characters all being dead past a given point in his career has a certain validity. Witness "Babylon Revisited" and the never-completed *The Last Tycoon* which Fitzgerald was working on at the time of his death. Assuming that Zelda was reading his stuff in the various sanatoria where she was confined, it seems more than a little cruel, which is the point Jaka is trying to make

Page 210 - Fans of *The Great Gatsby* will recognize Jay Gatsby's trademark salutation, "Old Sport," in the conversation Cerebus is relating here. I suspect that such salutations as "Old Sport," "Old Man," et al. had already eroded into "Pal" and "Buddy" by Fitzgerald's time—well on their way to "Man" and "Dude" in our current misapprehension of an age

## ORIGINS

It is received wisdom in most literary circles that *The Great Gatsby* is F. Scott Fitzgerald's only "great" novel. I vehemently disagree. Personally, I place *The Great Gatsby* a very, very distant third behind *The Beautiful and Damned* and *Tender is the Night* in Fitzgerald's oeuvre. Apart from my own pet theory that *The Great Gatsby* represents Scott Fitzgerald's partial acquiescence to what I see as Hemingway's corruption/"innovation" (if novels are going to compete with movies, we have to write 'em short enough so a literate person can read 'em in the same length of time it takes to watch a movie, and we have to write 'em stupid enough so even morons can understand 'em), I believe *Gatsby* is more highly regarded in literary environs for reasons of gender politics; *Gatsby* pines away for Daisy and then dies—and that suits the tactical agenda of the unfairest sex as the "last word" on the Fitzgeralds' Scott pining away for Zelda and then dying

I believe that *Tender is the Night* gets dismissed in these same circles because it is more factual than *Gatsby* and that the way it is more factual than *Gatsby* is very much at variance with the tactical agenda of the unfairest sex: that is to say, Zelda was insane and what was Scott to do about it? Thus, it seems to me, is a far more factual



"last word" on the Fitzgeralds than "Scott pining away for Zelda and then dying"

I believe *The Beautiful and Damned* is not only dismissed but *eradicated* in these same literary circles (when was the last time you saw the novel mentioned?) because it represents the clearest documentation of the origins of the factual "last word" on the Fitzgeralds. Here is Zelda's insanity at the beginning of their relationship. Here is Zelda's insanity during their courtship. Here is Zelda's insanity on their honeymoon. Here is Zelda's insanity during...well, you get the idea.

*The Beautiful and Damned*, to me, represents most of the points of origin of the full flowering of female insanity in this century and how female insanity ensnares, corrupts, and (if allowed to do so) ultimately destroys masculine sanity.

Mind you, it's very, very funny

For 1922, particularly, it is a very keenly observed, very sophisticated blending of autobiography, the best of Victorian drawing-room comedy (its most immediate antecedent), and the domestic "screwball" comedy (its most immediate successor) which would dominate Hollywood for several decades from Powell and Loy in the *Thin Man* movies to Tracy and Hepburn in *Adam's Rib*. Even leaving aside what I see as the book's considerable literary merits, it seems suspicious that its influence on popular culture would be so consistently overlooked by those who see popular culture as having signpost significance. The only way I can account for it is the potential harm it represents for the unfairer sex's tactical agenda

Scott Fitzgerald, very late in his short life, in correspondence with his daughter, Scotty, assured the young college student (who, I surmise, had just read *The Beautiful and Damned*) that Zelda had not been at all like Gloria Patch except in a few surface details. Well, this is nonsense. There is far too much evidence and too many eyewitness accounts to the contrary. Fitzgerald was just (needlessly, in my view) playing the gentleman. It was silly to try to protect his daughter from the fact that her mother was insane. Far better if he had just said, "Your mother was insane and—if you aren't already—soon you will be, too." But, no, the central recurrent lie in the father/daughter relationship so cherished by fathers and daughters everywhere has to assert itself: "Don't tell Daddy about any of the insane things I do/think/say. It's important that I can continue to delude him into thinking that I'm sane. I mean, I know I'm insane, but it's so nice to have someone in my life I can fool. I sure can't fool *mud*ther."

(This is all rather long-winded and I apologize for that. However, the text pieces in this section of "Fall and the River" represent the foundation on which the story line was built—and it requires more than a few words to explain my motivations and sequence of decisions which led to "Fall and the River" having the content and structure that it does. Consider most of this section as a terribly windy exposition in answer to the question—and aren't you sorry you asked?—"Why *The Beautiful and Damned*?" )

It is particularly fascinating to me—even while I am laughing out loud at Anthony and Gloria getting their new car, Anthony and Gloria arguing about the laundry, Anthony and Gloria discussing their baby-to-be—that Gloria, step by intuitive step, ensnares, corrupts, and devours what few vestiges of masculinity Anthony possesses and that Scott Fitzgerald *documents* the whole monstrous business with great wit and flair and eloquence without *once* evincing the *least* concern with the process—even as the same hideous process was taking place in his own life at the same time. I mean, not a word apart from a kind of amiable, glib, shoulder-shrugging, "Heh-heh. *Wives*, eh? What's a fellow to do?"

DO!?! GET OUT!!! RUN FOR YOUR LIFE!! THROW MONEY AT THE BITCH UNTIL SHE GOES AWAY!!! WHATEVER IT COSTS, IT WILL BE CHEAP AT TWICE, THREE TIMES THE PRICE!! SCOTT!! SCOTT!! LISTEN TO ME—THINK OF YOUR TALENT, YOUR CREATIVITY, YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO WESTERN LITERATURE!!!! SCOOOTTTTTTTTTT!!!!

You know, I just had the same experience with Leo Tolstoy when I read *War and Peace*. I'd be reading these really amazing insights into the female gender, and I'd have to keep flipping back to the introduction. "Hang on. He *knows* all this and he got *married*? And had *thirteen children*? What sort of an *idiot* was this genius?" Then I remembered having heard something about him dying in a train station, trying to get away from the loony bitch, so I tracked down one of the multitude of Tolstoy biographies available at the library. And, well..

What an *idiot* that genius was!

I mean, apart from trying to run away on the train, which—when you know you're dying—strikes me as a little late in the day for a genius to try to stop being an idiot.

I digress.

Anyway.

From my initial series of "concept notes" as I approached "Fall and the River":

*The problem posed by F. Scott Fitzgerald, to me, is that he chose—partly as a consequence of the time in which he lived and worked (which constitutes more of an excuse than a reason)—to limit his horizons to "love" and "gods," rather than God and the love of God. My goal, with Pleasure's Simple Life, F. Stop Kennedy's book on his autumn barge ride with Jaka and Cerebus, is to attempt to redress what I see as the grievous imbalance posed by Fitzgerald's choice of low horizons; to raise those horizons inasmuch as it is possible to do so by rewriting Fitzgerald, even as Fitzgerald himself "re-wrote" much of Fitzgerald in his lifetime. It is a delicate balancing act which will be assisted, I think, through the Cirinist elimination of currency. Without base materialism, Fitzgerald, it seems to me, has to become a better Fitzgerald. Instead of merely staying ahead of the problem of living beyond one's means by devoting a disproportionate amount of time and energy to lesser but*



more lucrative work (the Saturday Evening Post stories), one would be forced to anticipate the ethical and moral implications posed by the Cirinist revolution. "Zelda" is being cared for, and her material comfort level varies in direct proportion to F. Stop's moral and ethical usefulness, as perceived by the Cirinists—the perceived usefulness of his literary insights in assisting the Cirinists to plot the "trajectory" of their ongoing revolution. Without the mundane to occupy his attentions and with genuine concern for "Zelda" as his motivation—and with his bitterness restricted to his natural rebellion against the status quo (his inherent writerly rebellion)—he becomes disengaged from Fitzgerald's Oscar Wildean urge to turn everything upside down and grab a disproportionate number of societal "goodies" for himself ("A Diamond as Big as the Ritz," indeed) and instead is forced to play cat-and-mouse with his Cirinist captors. Occasionally F. Stop is the cat—when his writing introduces some hitherto unconsidered nuance of great creative and/or destructive power into the society-wide telepathic debate—but more often the mouse, as he is either misunderstood, understood too quickly, or is arbitrarily oversimplified in Cirinist telepathic "translation."

So, that is what I attempted to do: by taking extracts of varying length from *The Beautiful and Damned*, I endeavoured to rewrite them as I thought they would be written by a more ethical F. Scott Fitzgerald. Not "as they would be written by a more ethical writer" or "as I would write them on the basis of my own ethics," but as I thought they would be written by the specific character I was attempting to create.

By way of example.

Page 212 - The first half of the first paragraph is from page 325 of *The Beautiful and Damned*, the "A Matter of Civilization" chapter. Approximately twelve lines concerning Anthony's affair with Dorothy Raycroft. I photocopied the twelve lines onto an 11" x 17" sheet of paper (the lower right corner) and wrote "F. Stop on his feelings for Jaka" at the top.\*

\* I intentionally allotted myself *only* the space that was left over on the 11" x 17" sheet for constructing, by hand, each piece in question. I realize that, in this computer-addicted age, this seems a very strange way to go about the task of writing—that is, by actually *writing*—but I do want to express my advocacy of *actually writing* when one wants to *write*. It seems to me that the problem with trying to "write" on a computer is that you are always looking at an ostensibly finished-looking piece. On a computer you can take things out, move them around, insert additional material, all without affecting the aesthetic appearance of a finished-looking block of text, and this strikes me as a really undisciplined way to go about things. By actually *writing* the material out *by hand* and having to cross out unsuitable phrasing and composition, I find I have a much clearer idea of my own level of attention and discipline (and lack of same) which I am bringing to bear on the piece of writing in question. As an example: if I cross out the same sentence three times, I know that I am being inattentive, lazy, and undisciplined. At that point, I put my pen down, sit back, and *work* at improving my level of attention and discipline *mentally* before I pick up my pen again. On a computer, all corrections disappear into the void, leaving no evidence of their former existence and no evidence of attention and discipline. For less important writing—like these notes—I can work on a typewriter (as I am doing now). The required level of attention and discipline seems to result from my unwillingness to use the white correction ribbon for anything more than two or three characters and my disinterest in making any substantial changes once Carol has "input" the material. I type in bursts of eight or nine words, and then I stop and *mentally solidify* the structure and phrasing of the *next* eight or nine words before I even *consider* typing them out. I say this in the interest of perhaps helping some future writer who might be reading this—just because everyone you know is addicted to using a computer does not mean that it is the best tool for writing. In my opinion exactly the opposite is true. Computers, by their very nature, are lazy instruments which encourage inattentiveness and a lack of discipline, and are, consequently, destructive of whatever natural writing ability you might possess. This is particularly true for F. Scott Fitzgerald's brand of writing, with its extensive rewriting and polishing of every phrase. If Scott had had a computer and lived to be ninety, I can practically guarantee that all we would have of his would be the first ten pages of *This Side of Paradise*.

This is what I was referring to earlier when I said that I intended to push the envelope of what constitutes plagiarism, parody, satire, etc. Essentially, I reworked each phrase, each sentence, and occasionally each word until it was consistent with my mental picture of F. Stop Kennedy, character and author.

In Fitzgerald's original: "Anthony's affair with Dorothy Raycroft was an inevitable result of his increasing carelessness about himself."

Hung over on Saturday morning in my brand-spanking-new library/den in the spare bedroom of my apartment, I would reread each sentence any number of times to see if anything jumped out at me.

Ah!

"... an inevitable result."

Then I would sit back and mull it over. It should be "the," shouldn't it? "[A]n" would imply that there can be more than one "inevitable" result. If there's more than one possible result, ipso facto, it isn't inevitable, right?

After fifteen or twenty minutes of interior debate, I wrote down: "Jay Anthony Diver's preoccupation with Ginevra, the Princess of Hearts as she was popularly known, owed much to his increasing carelessness about himself." "Owed much" seemed at least incrementally more ethical, more truthfully self-aware than "an inevitable result of..." F. Scott Fitzgerald can describe an affair as being "an inevitable result," since Scott, by his own admission, never thought (when he was finally forced to try it, he described thinking as "the moving about of great secret trunks"). Such a thing is impossible for F. Stop Kennedy. His "preoccupation" with a woman not his wife can "owe much to his increasing carelessness about himself," but, much or little, the ethical decision is his to make or not make. Following the same sort of process, I added "immediate" to "preoccupation" and—after mulling it over a while—added "almost" to "immediate." To F. Stop, ethics and truthfulness hang on just such sharp and fine distinctions. A husband having a "preoccupation" with a woman who is not his wife is an ethical transgression, but it is not as great a

transgression as an “affair,” nor is it “inevitable” in any way. The fact that it is “almost immediate” constitutes F. Stop’s indictment of himself, the “almost” representing both a qualification that a choice was involved and that an ethical boundary has been crossed.

Does anyone else *care* about any of this? Probably not. “Love at first sight” and all that rubbish. Ah, well. *My story My notes* Suffer, dear reader, suffer...

The balance of the first paragraph is freely adapted from a rejected passage from an earlier draught of *The Beautiful and Damned*. It seemed to me unethical in its original form in that it was all *plural*, referring to Anthony and Gloria: “they were ringed ’round by high portentous walls whereupon they would run to and fro in a panic...” etc. It seems to me that all ethics are singular, all sound ethical choices are individual. It’s the reason that I find marriage ethically perverse. Decision-making in the context of marriage isn’t made on the basis of distinctions between right and wrong, but rather on a series of trade-offs—doing something that one thinks is wrong in exchange for the “partner” doing something one thinks is right, or the “partners” jointly concluding that something that is widely perceived to be wrong is in fact right, or (conversely) that something that is widely perceived to be right is in fact wrong, etc. In my own view, if such a societal sickness is left untreated, inside of a few decades it leads to Yoko Ono.

“I see I am starting wrong. Let me begin again.”

This transition—which I find absolutely brilliant—I stole, word for word, from one of Fitzgerald’s stories. I’m going to be just “sloppy and unprofessional” enough to not go and look it up. I’m sort of making fun of my own obsession with ethics here. F. Stop starts writing about being attracted to Jaka and then immediately swerves into an internal debate about ethics. In my view, he isn’t starting wrong at all, but he does recognize that he is losing his audience by swerving from attraction into ethics. In order to retain the attention of the Cirinists and (ultimately) his readers, F. Stop—like all narrative creators (another pet theory of mine)—has to refrain from any consideration of ethics and conform to the universal and amoral romantic construct: greater attraction follows attraction, just as still greater attraction follows greater attraction (and ethics be damned).

Page 213 - F. Stop Kennedy chooses to walk a tightrope here by moving obliquely from his own attraction to “Ginevra” to the legions of those who have been attracted to “Ginevra” in the past—thus fulfilling the mandatory progression from attraction to greater attraction (substituting the quantitative for the qualitative) while removing himself and his ethics from the equation (temporarily). The last paragraph of the “Ginevra” section is a parody of a fragment from the “A Matter of Aesthetics” chapter (*The Beautiful and Damned*, page 363), which concerns Gloria’s isolation and self-examination in the immediate aftermath of Anthony going off to war (like Fitzgerald, he never actually gets there). F. Stop has rather artfully (I must say) manipulated the “rules” of

romantic narrative. Having started with his own attraction to Ginevra and achieved the required amoral progression by alluding to her previous legions of suitors, he moves to the next level of still greater attraction—“Ginevra’s” profound attraction to herself and her own “story.” Since all women have a greater attraction to themselves and their stories than they have to any mate, any potential suitor, or their previous suitors, the Cirinists and F. Stop’s readers see nothing amiss in the “progression,” and their attention is maintained.

Back at *The Beautiful and Damned*, Gloria, bored with self-examination (and it never takes long, does it?), finds herself out on the town (pages 368-369) with another woman (whose husband has also gone off to war) and a couple of military types on leave. Gloria, of course, is completely innocent in her intentions and horrified to find out that a certain amount of hanky-panky is expected from her. I photocopied Fitzgerald’s description of Gloria’s “date” and wrote at the top: “F. Stop on Cerebus: very early on.” Fitzgerald’s original character was a member of the famous “Scroll and Keys” club at Yale. Very much at a loss as to what to do with this, I changed it to “scrolls and key,” and I leave it entirely up to the reader to decide what the young men of F. Stop Kennedy’s generation mean by that appellation. I haven’t the faintest idea, but it doesn’t sound good, does it?

Page 214 - The progression is complete: attraction (F. Stop’s for “Ginevra”) to greater attraction (all of her previous suitors) to still greater attraction (Ginevra for herself) to the greatest possible attraction (her current and most devoted “beau,” “Jozan”). F. Stop then finishes off the section with a one-sentence paragraph foreshadowing what he *hopes* is the imminent erosion of the “Jozan and Ginevra” relationship (a definite ethical transgression on his part), fulfilling the ultimate cliché of the romantic narrative: attraction, greater attraction, still greater attraction, greatest attraction, destruction—unless you go in for that “happily ever after” stuff.

The last paragraph is a parody of an earlier section of *The Beautiful and Damned*, wherein Anthony takes his first good, hard look at Gloria (I didn’t keep the page number when I photocopied it, so no page number, scholar squirrels. Sorry). This is where the story gets really dangerous, since F. Stop is a lot more sophisticated than Cerebus and Jaka put together. Jaka has no idea this is true, and that puts her at quite a disadvantage.

It came as quite a surprise to me (I must admit) when five of *The Beautiful and Damned* pieces I had reworked and *intended* to scatter through “Fall and the River”—Johnny Appleseed fashion—coalesced into one thumping great three-page chunk.

Page 218 - Doing all of the parody text pieces first and developing the comic-book narrative around them presented interesting opportunities. One of the things I wanted to clarify was that just as F. Stop Kennedy is not a fictional replica of Dave Sim (apart from surface similarities, such as both of us writing while shaving), so too



is Jay Anthony Diver not a fictional replica of F. Stop Kennedy. "He could say 'No!' neither to others nor to himself; the virtuous and the corrupt alike found him tender-hearted and acquiescent." A handful of pages later, Jaka wants to read what he has written so far and he, quite flatly, tells her "No."

That's telling her, Francis, old man.

Page 232 - Of course, M. Zulli's lithograph series, "Faces of Nature," exists only in "Fall and the River." The actual images have been photocopied out of a couple of issues of *The Puma Blues* by Stephen Murphy and Michael Zulli (a comic book which I published back in the 1980s through the now—mercifully—defunct Aardvark One International). I met Michael and Stephen at the now—regrettably—defunct Moondance Comics in Hadley, Massachusetts, the same weekend that I first met Kevin Eastman and Pete Laird. Michael brought a couple of professionally matted pages of his and Stephen's collaboration to my signing and asked me what I thought they should do with *The Puma Blues*. Foolishly, I told them that they should let *me* publish it, and—apart from the first volume of Steve Bissette's *Taboo* horror anthology—*The Puma Blues* became my last foray into publishing other creators' works. Despite my unnecessary intrusion, by all accounts Michael and Stephen have gone on, subsequently, to have successful and fulfilling lives and careers.

Needless to say...

(Oh, wait. This is the very, very late 20th century.)

*I find it necessary to point out...*

...that Jaka did *not*, in fact, write the introduction to M. Zulli's lithograph series, which F. Stop Kennedy is reciting here. In her capacity as Princess of Palnu, she prevailed upon some star-struck and too-chivalrous-for-words writer of note to do so on her behalf, and then she signed her name to it. Of course, typical of the Jakas of this world, she has half-persuaded herself that she *did* write the introduction—again, typically—by mistaking seminal impetus and the fact that she substituted a synonym here or there in the finished work for the act of creation itself. Astute fellow that he is, F. Stop Kennedy is fully aware that the piece is ghostwritten. Even *more* astute fellow that he is, F. Stop Kennedy pretends to believe that Jaka is, indeed, the authoress and has (even *more* astutely) gone to the trouble of reconstructing it from memory, thus breaching, with minimal effort, the impregnable walls with which Jaka otherwise surrounds herself. There is, as F. Stop Kennedy is only too aware, more than one way to skin an aristocratic cat.

Page 233 - I was trying for several layers of meaning with this page. Those who find more than a single layer of intended meaning "pretentious" or Pretentious are invited to skip over this note.

a) Resonant with F. Stop Kennedy's recitation of Jaka's ghostwriter's observations on "high end" representational art (in comic-book art, "high end" would exist at the end of the spectrum typified by the Michael

Zulli eagle head which I photocopied from an issue of *The Puma Blues* and pasted very much in the middle and very much at the *top* of the page—and at the "low end" of the spectrum by, let us say, Julie Doucet and her ilk), I "raised the bar" for myself by setting the Zulli eagle head as my challenge. I then photocopied another *Puma Blues* panel on settings of 100%, 200%, and 400% (200% twice, actually) for panels 4, 3, and 2 respectively, traced them off and then attempted to bring to bear on the successive enlargements the same degree of polish and detail and exactitude that Michael brought to bear on his eagle head some ten or twelve years ago. Knowing in advance what a miserable failure my effort would be—by contrast with Michael's, if nothing else—I specially selected a panel of a terrified flying squirrel (yes, that is what the creature is supposed to be and what, in Michael's original panel, it unquestionably *is*). When it comes to nature shots, Michael Zulli = eagle; Dave Sim = terrified flying squirrel.

(b) Jaka's misapprehension that she has fooled, intimidated, and impressed F. Stop Kennedy with her introduction to M. Zulli's lithograph series. Jaka = eagle; F. Stop Kennedy = terrified flying squirrel.

(c) By pretending to be fooled, intimidated, and impressed by "Jaka's" introduction, F. Stop Kennedy herds the People's Princess into a corner from which there is no escape, save by the route he intends her to take. F. Stop Kennedy = eagle; Jaka = terrified flying squirrel. Of course, Jaka is too unsophisticated to even know that this is going on—but that's what makes the F. Stop/Jaka character combination such fun to work with.

Page 242 - Never having come close, myself, to the hardcore level of alcoholism represented by F. Scott Fitzgerald and F. Stop Kennedy, I am curious as to what the "lowest circle of hell" might be. Thus, it seems to me, is the second last "stop (pun intended) on the railroad" before gulping it straight out of the bottle.

Page 243 - It was a curious aspect of F. Scott Fitzgerald's makeup that he denied—consistently—being an alcoholic, in his personal correspondence, his conversation, his public essays, and, all evidence would seem to indicate, to himself. In the first instalment of his three-part series for *Esquire* in 1936 ("The Crack-Up," "Handle with Care," and "Pasting it Together"), Fitzgerald writes

*William Seabrook in an unsympathetic book tells, with some pride, and a movie ending, of how he became a public charge. What led to his alcoholism or was bound up with it was a collapse of his nervous system. Though the present writer was not so entangled—having at the time not tasted so much as a glass of beer for six months—it was his nervous reflexes that were giving way—too much anger and too many tears.*

Fitzgerald did a lot of this gilding of lilies. He might've been off the sauce for three weeks, and that



would miraculously become six months when he related it in a letter or conversation. He might've steered away from gin (his tippable of choice, because it is reputed to be odourless—which I imagine it is, unless you drink a quart of it a day), but he would replace it with (get this) twenty or thirty beers. Big improvement. Not only was it demonstrably untrue that he had not "tasted so much as a glass of beer for six months" at the time of his "Crack-Up," but...note the "at the time" "qualifier." So enmeshed was F. Scott Fitzgerald in his own self-destruction, it seemed to have escaped him—entirely—that one can go for a period of six months without so much as a taste of a glass of beer and still be an irretrievable alcoholic. Note, as well, the "too much anger and too many tears" reference. Scott's inability/unwillingness to grow up in any meaningful sense of the term (to which I have alluded previously) stands out in even sharper relief when placed alongside his inability/unwillingness to recognize (particularly in the context of his own Masculine Time Period) that "too much anger and too many tears" are not normal/helpful/sensible/reasonable/wise masculine reactions to life's stresses and strains, bumps and grinds...and that alcoholism was a good bet if he was casting about for a primary cause of the degraded state in which he found himself. As John Dos Passos wrote to him in the fall of 1936

*I've been wanting to see you, naturally, to argue about your Esquire articles—Christ, man, how do you find time in the middle of the general conflagration to worry about all that stuff? ... (w)e're living in one of the damndest tragic moments in history—if you want to go to pieces I think it's absolutely O.K., but I think you ought to write a first rate novel about it (and you probably will) instead of spilling it in little pieces for (Esquire's) Arnold Gingrich... (f)orgive the locker room pep talk*

Emphasis mine. Although I'm sure this is all quite beyond the effete interests of the inhabitants of our androgynous age, I think that Dos Passos struck exactly the right note. By 1936, Fitzgerald was literally years overdue for some kind of man-to-man "locker room pep talk," so profoundly unaware did he appear to be of how inappropriate his references to "nervous reflexes...giving way" and "too much anger and too many tears" were in light of the infinitely more serious worldwide depression and imminent European war

Throughout her various treatments and therapies, Zelda held pretty firmly to the view that her relationship with Scott—and her own mental health—would experience a decided improvement if Scott would just quit drinking. There's a good case to be made for this, I think. Pretty clearly, after the Edouard Jozan episode, Fitzgerald's not insignificant drinking problem worsened dramatically into full-blown alcoholism, and his alcoholic "mean streak" mushroomed in tandem with it. In their correspondence Zelda would allude to his extreme cruelty on those occasions when he would disappear for most of a

day and night (*Notebook* entry: "I think I'd better go out and stay too long, don't you?") and return oozing malice and alcohol from every pore. No large coincidence, I think, that Anthony and Gloria's first major marital battle takes place when Anthony has had too much to drink (*The Beautiful and Damned*, page 196):

*With Eric Merriam, Anthony had been sitting over a decanter of Scotch all the hot summer afternoon, while Gloria and Constance Merriam swam and sunned themselves at the Beach Club, the latter under a striped parasol-awning, Gloria stretched sensuously upon the soft hot sand, tanning her inevitable legs. Later they had all four played with inconsequential sandwiches; then Gloria had risen, tapping Anthony's knee with her parasol to get his attention.*

*"We've got to go, dear."*

*"Now?" He looked at her unwillingly. At that moment nothing seemed of more importance than to idle on that shady porch drinking mellowed Scotch, while his host reminisced interminably on the byplay of some forgotten political campaign.*

*"We've really got to go," repeated Gloria*

*"We can get a taxi to the station... Come on, Anthony!" she commanded a bit more imperiously.*

*"Now see here—" Merriam, his yarn cut off, made conventional objections, meanwhile provocatively filling his guest's glass with a high-ball that should have been sipped through ten minutes. But at Gloria's "We really must!" Anthony drank it off, got to his feet and made an elaborate bow to his hostess.*

*"It seems we 'must,'" he said, with little grace.*

*"...sitting over a decanter of Scotch all the hot summer afternoon..."*

*"...filling his guest's glass with a high-ball that should have been sipped through ten minutes."*

If this episode has its real-life Scott-and-Zelda counterpart, then it seems pretty obvious (to me, anyway, and I've been known to have a drink or two in my day) that this is very, very heavy drinking that we are talking about here and Zelda/Gloria isn't so much being imperious as sensible: Scott/Anthony is already disastrously drunk, and she really has no choice but to persuade him to leave before his condition worsens—as Zelda/Gloria no doubt knows from experience that it will—to such an extent that leaving becomes physically impossible. It is interesting to me that Scott Fitzgerald treats alcohol in *The Beautiful and Damned* with the same cheerful fatalism with which he treats matrimony: "Heh-heh. Booze, eh? What's a fellow to do?"

DO?! STOP DRINKING !! NOW!! COMPLETELY!! YOU CAN'T HANDLE IT!! SCOTT!! THINK OF YOUR TALENT!! YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD'S LITERATURE, etc. etc. (or "ect. ect." as Scott wrote, idiosyncratically, all his life).

Page 246 - Later in the same chapter of *The Beautiful and Damned*, after a particularly confusing and horrific episode at one of Anthony and Gloria's parties (I say "confusing" because I've read the book—or most of it—three times now and I still can't figure out what happened to Gloria/Zelda or what Anthony/Scott *thinks* happened to Gloria/Zelda or what Gloria/Zelda *told* Anthony/Scott happened to her...anyway), Gloria flees from her house in terror and, after she is discovered missing, is pursued by Anthony, Maury Noble, and Dick Caramel, who track her to a small railway station.

*Anthony and Dick converted a long box into a back rest and found a board dry enough for Gloria to sit on. Anthony dropped down beside her and with some effort Dick hoisted himself onto an apple-barrel near them*

Thus, the stage is set for what is, in my opinion, one of the strangest pieces of writing in Scott Fitzgerald's total output (right up there with the "apropos nothing" introductory paragraph to his short story "Dalyrimple Goes Wrong") and one of the strangest monologues in the history of American literature:

*"How do you do!" The voice, sonorous and funereal, had come from above, and they looked up startled to find that in some manner Maury had climbed to the roof of the shed, where he sat dangling his feet over the edge, outlined as a shadowy and fantastic gargoyle against the now brilliant sky.*

*"It must be for such occasions as this," he began softly, his words having the effect of floating down from an immense height and settling softly upon his auditors, "that the righteous of the land decorate the railroads with bill-boards asserting in red and yellow that 'Jesus Christ is God,' placing them, appropriately enough, next to announcements that 'Gunter's Whiskey is Good.'"*

*There was gentle laughter and the three below kept their heads tilted upward.*

I can't honestly say which it was that I found more troubling and/or difficult about Maury Noble's ensuing speech: stealing it, inverting it, parodying it—or trying to make the whole thing make sense.

It took most of a year and all of one monthly instalment (*Cerebus* 244, July 1999) to bring it from the initial concept to the finished—for better or worse—execution.

At the point of greatest reduction, I suppose that I can console myself—at the very least—with the fact that I never have to work on those twenty pages again.

*"Experience is the name Tubby gives to his mistakes"*

F. Scott Fitzgerald paraphrasing  
Oscar Wilde in a letter to Edmund  
Wilson, 10 January 1918

Pages 247-266 - The Maury Noble monologue actually makes up only a part of the "Symposium" chapter in *The Beautiful and Damned*, although it does tend to *dominate* the chapter. Very late in the writing of the book, Fitzgerald was still wrestling with the monologue. At the time when he was contractually obligated to have turned in the finished manuscript, in a letter postmarked November 25, 1921, Fitzgerald, with characteristic overstatement, was writing to Edmund "Bunny" Wilson:

*I have almost completely rewritten my book. Do you remember that you told me that in my midnight symposium scene I had sort of set the stage for a play that never came off—in other words when they all began to talk none of them had anything important to say. I've interpolated some recent ideas of my own and (possibly) of others. See enclosure at end of letter.*

In *The Crack-Up*, Wilson has footnoted this part of the letter with: "These enclosures included the greater part of Maury Noble's monologue in the chapter called 'Symposium.'"

This surprised the hell out of me when I read it. "You mean Scott *didn't* just write Maury Noble's monologue off the top of his head and neglect to take another look at it? He actually *rewrote* the thing and it's *still* that stupid and incoherent?"

Evidently one of the additions of Scott's "recent ideas and (possibly) of others" was the following:

*Once upon a time all the men of mind and genius in the world became of one belief—that is to say, of no belief. But it wearied them to think that within a few years after their death many cults and systems and prognostications would be ascribed to them, which they had never meditated nor intended. So they said to one another:*

*"Let's join together and make a great book that will last forever to mock the credulity of man. Let's persuade our more erotic poets to write about the delights of the flesh, and induce some of our robust journalists to contribute stories of famous amours. We'll include all the most preposterous old wives' tales now current. We'll choose the keenest satirist alive to compile a deity from all the deities worshipped by mankind, a deity who will be more magnificent than any of them, and yet so weakly human that he'll become a byword for laughter the world over—and we'll ascribe to him all sorts of jokes and vanities and rages, in which he'll be supposed to indulge for his own diversion, so that the people will read our book and ponder it, and there'll be no more nonsense in the world.*

*"Finally, let us take care that the book possesses all the virtues of style, so that it may last forever as a witness to our profound scepticism and our universal irony."*



*So the men did, and they died.*

*But the book lived always, so beautifully had it been written, and so astounding the quality of imagination which these men of mind and genius had endowed it. They had neglected to give it a name, but after they were dead it became known as the Bible.*

To me, this is F. Scott Fitzgerald at his most fatuous and simple-minded. As fatuous and simple-minded as Oscar Wilde at his most fatuous and simple-minded, which is really saying something. What would be a good example? Oscar, after he had his hair permed, telling people that he resembled the bust of Nero in the British museum. Yes, *that* fatuous and simple-minded: intending the kind of shock value that even the most ignorant outgrow by the time they're four or five years old. A complete lack of proportion and perspective—not to mention basic maturity.

From "Handle with Care," one of Fitzgerald's conclusions after his first experiment with thinking—the aforementioned "moving about of great secret trunks" (the third conclusion of which was the reference to Hemingway; see note for page 195):

- (1) *That I had done very little thinking, save within the problems of my craft. For twenty years a certain man had been my intellectual conscience. That was Edmund Wilson.*

For a long time I never understood how Wilson had been an intellectual conscience to Scott (from where I sit, Scott didn't *have* an intellectual conscience). Even leaving aside the self-evident fatuousness and simple-mindedness in thinking that someone *else* can serve as one's *own* intellectual conscience, there is very little evidence of Scott taking notice of anything Wilson writes to him in their extensive correspondence. Then, of course, I ran across a devastating satirical piece that Wilson had published as part of a book called *Discordant Encounters* (1926: ten years before the publication of "Handle with Care"), a series of fictitious dialogues between famous individuals. "The Delegate from Great Neck" unfolds as a conversation between Mr. Van Wyck Brooks (Grand Old Man of American Letters in the early part of the 20th century) and Mr. Scott Fitzgerald, who has been appointed by the writers of the Younger Generation to present a letter to Van Wyck Brooks. It's a magnificent piece of writing—the letter, of course, being what Edmund Wilson would like to express to Van Wyck Brooks a substantial and eloquent expression of what Wilson sees as his generation's "best foot forward" in addressing a literary titan of the previous generation. The letter is scholarly, concise, incisive, but it's being read to him by fatuous, simple-minded, and callow F. Scott Fitzgerald.

MR. FITZGERALD: *How do you do. I'm afraid it's an awful nuisance for you to see me.*

MR. BROOKS: *Not at all. I'm very glad to. I'm*

*only sorry to have had to put it off. But I've been so frightfully busy with my book that I haven't been able to do anything.*

MR. FITZGERALD: *What's that—the James? I suppose you're hurrying to have it out in time to get the benefit of the publicity of the Dial award.*

MR. BROOKS: *Oh, no: it may take me a long time yet. But it's really rather a complicated job and I don't like to drop a chapter in the middle or I lose all the threads. I've just come to a breathing space.*

MR. FITZGERALD: *I should think you'd want to rush it right through and get it out now: it might double your sales.*

MR. BROOKS: *Oh, I couldn't possibly: I still have a good deal of work to do on it.*

MR. FITZGERALD: *I suppose you must read hundreds of books, don't you? How many books do you suppose you've read for the James? Two hundred? Five hundred?*

MR. BROOKS: *Oh, I don't know, I'm sure—everything I could get hold of that threw any light on him.*

MR. FITZGERALD: *I suppose you must quote on an average of four or five books on every page of one of your biographies, don't you?—and you probably refer to four or five others—and you've probably read half a dozen others that you didn't get anything out of. That makes fifteen or sixteen books just to write a single page! For a book of two hundred and fifty pages that would be—*

MR. BROOKS: *They're not all different books, you know. One uses the same books again and again.*

MR. FITZGERALD: *I know, but even so—it's perfectly amazing! I suppose you must know more about American literature than anybody else in the world, don't you?*

MR. BROOKS: *Oh, no! Not by any means.*

MR. FITZGERALD: *Well, you're the greatest writer on the subject, anyway. That's the reason we've written you this letter. As I told you, I've been delegated by the Younger Generation of American writers to congratulate you for getting the prize. They chose me as really the original member of the Younger Generation. Of course, there were a lot of people writing before This Side of Paradise—but the Younger Generation never really became self-conscious before then nor did the public at large become conscious of it. My slogan is that I am the man who made America Younger-Generation-conscious.*

MR. BROOKS: *Well, I am certainly very much flattered—*

MR. FITZGERALD: *Besides, I'm about the only one who still really looks young. Most of the others are getting old and bald and discouraged. So they picked me out to represent them. They thought they ought to send somebody under thirty. Well, could you stand to have me read you the letter they've written you or would you rather read it yourself?*



God, that's funny. I'm quoting way too much of it, but let Edmund Wilson's estate or trustees or whatever come and lock me up. It's worth it.

Heh. Oh, sorry. Where was I? Right. Now, a little later on, "Van Wyck Brooks" interrupts Edmund Wilson's letter, which has just advanced a thesis championing James' autobiographical volumes

*MR. BROOKS: I beg your pardon: but I really think you overestimate the vividness of those autobiographical volumes! To me there has always seemed to be something rather flaccid and empty about them. Think how much more colorful and spirited is Cellini's autobiography! How much more candid Rousseau's! How much more alive to the intellectual currents of their time those of Renan and Mill! How much richer in psychological interest Marie Bashkirtseff's! James wrote in his later years, you know, of "the starved romance of my life." And what I feel in his autobiography is the starvation rather than the romance. What American can fail to recognize the peculiar American spiritual blight of which James himself spoke so often? Have we not all run up against it—an impotence and blindness of the soul—like one of those great blank implacable walls that balk the view in American cities?*

*MR. FITZGERALD: The Puritan thing, you mean. I suppose you're probably right. I don't know anything about James myself. I've never read a word of him. Just let me finish reading; there's not very much more.*

*"We thus deprecate the gloomy conclusions you have come to in regard to the American classics; yet, with our conviction of the importance of the social criticism which has betrayed you into them, we should never have thought of complaining, if we had not recently come to fear that your long preoccupation with the diagnosis of our diseases of the past has ended by inhibiting your view with an a priori theory about our future. You have discovered so many reasons why artistic achievement in America should be difficult that you seem finally to have become convinced that it is permanently impossible. When you write of contemporary literature, it is politely, but without conviction: the modern writers who have been most successful in realizing the ideal you proposed have not received your accolade. And the effect upon us, in the long run, has been a little discouraging. The other day, one of the youngest of our number, reading your essay on *The Literary Life*, broke down in a wild fit of weeping and cursed God for having made him an American."*

*MR. BROOKS: Dear me! How distressing! Really—*

*MR. FITZGERALD: Oh, that's just a silly joke! It didn't really happen, of course. I made it up myself and had them put it in. In fact, it's the only part I wrote. I'm sorry: I suppose it was bad taste!*

*"...broke down in a wild fit of weeping and cursed God for having made him an American." "Oh, that's just a silly joke."*

Thus, to me, is a very effective mirror to hold up to the kind of writing Scott Fitzgerald, on occasion, allowed himself to perpetrate—of which the "Bible passage" in Maury Noble's monologue, it seems to me, is the most deplorable example. His short story, "Absolution," is irreligious. But it is also effective, evocative, and thought-provoking. It's not the irreligious aspect of the "Bible passage" that I'm objecting to. It's the fatuous and simple-minded approach to a weighty subject. The net effect isn't shock or outrage on the part of the reader (not *this* reader, anyway); it's embarrassment on behalf of a writer so lacking in the basics of accurate self-perception that he doesn't seem to know enough to be embarrassed on his *own* behalf.

I'd be willing to bet that Scott polished off a good two bottles of gin the night he read "The Delegate from Great Neck" and cried himself to sleep.

Anyway, two months after he was supposed to have turned in the finished manuscript, Fitzgerald received a letter from Max Perkins suggesting that the "Bible passage" in Maury Noble's monologue might offend readers unnecessarily. Perkins' observation, "Even when people are altogether wrong you cannot but respect those who speak with such passionate sincerity," really seems to have stuck in Fitzgerald's craw, and he quotes it twice in his letter of reply. I, myself, was struck by what I see as Perkins' implication: that those who believe in the Bible are "altogether wrong." Leaving *that* aside, Fitzgerald's reply contains several interesting passages which are not so much refutations as really peculiar evasions:

*Now I feel sure that most people will know that my sketch refers to the Old Testament, and to Jehovah, the cruel Hebrew God, against whom such writers as even Mark Twain not to mention Anatole France and a host of others have delivered violent pyrotechnics from time to time.*

Unless I'm misreading it, Scott seems to be saying, "C'mon, Max. I'm not trashing the *Christian* God, I'm trashing the *Jewish* God, just like Mark Twain and Anatole France. You're not going to take some Jewish God's side against me and Twain and France, are you?" Fitzgerald goes on:

*As to the personal side of it, don't you think that all changes in the minds of people are brought about by the assertion of a thing—startling perhaps at first, but later often becoming, with the changes of the years, bromidic.*

As we will see, shortly, in the critical reaction to *The Beautiful and Damned*, Scott's "recent ideas of (his) own and (possibly) others" were already closer to "bromidic" than "startling," even in 1922. I would also suggest that in the late 20th century—when I'm writing this—the

view that the Bible is just a collection of fictitious folk tales has gone from bromidic to received wisdom in most intellectual and academic circles. So, mission accomplished (as it were).

Lest some of my readers think that I might be compromising my own beliefs in creative freedom as an absolute, Scott goes on to suggest: "If you object to my phrasing I could substitute 'deity' for 'godalmighty' and get a better word than bawdy—in fact make it more dignified—". Here, he seems to me to go from being merely fatuous and simple-minded to fatuous, simple-minded, and amoral. If he believed for one minute in the value of what he had written, how could he, ethically, compromise one word of it? Here he even implies that the piece is undignified and that changing a word or two would make it *more* dignified!

*—but I would hate to cut it out as it's very clever in its way and Mencken—who saw it—and Zelda were very enthusiastic about it*

Oh, well! If H. L. Mencken and Zelda Fitzgerald liked it, and it's "clever" by all accounts...

*It's the sort of thing you find continually in Anatole France's Revolt of the Angels—as well as in Jurgens and in Mark Twain's Mysterious Stranger. The idea, refusing homage to the Bible and its God, runs thru many of Mark Twain's essays and all through Paine's\* biography.*

You see, Max, it's not only Mark Twain, it's his biographer as well who is keen on the "idea" of "refusing homage to the Bible and its God." This is so intellectually vapid, it beggars the imagination.

*In fact, Van Wyck Brooks in The Ordeal (of Mark Twain) criticizes Clemens for allowing many of his statements to be toned down at the request of William Dean Howells or Mrs. Clemens.*

I wonder if Scott showed Edmund Wilson this letter or if Max Perkins did and that it became, some years later, the point of germination for "The Gentleman from Great Neck," the invoking of Van Wyck Brooks, at this point, having (possibly) left a bad taste in Wilson's mouth.

*If it was an incident which I felt had no particular literary merit I should defer to your judgement without question...*

It would be hoped, Mr Fitzgerald, that if you "felt" the piece had no particular literary merit, as a novelist, you would never have included it in the first place, rather than waiting for Max Perkins to point it out to you

*but that passage belongs beautifully to that scene*

*and is exactly what was needed to make it more than a beautiful setting for ideas that fail to appear.*

This is very peculiar to me, referring to Anthony's criticism of Maury's monologue near the end of the chapter. If the "ideas fail to appear" then, what exactly is it that Fitzgerald is defending? Clearly, by his own admission, the "Bible passage", having "appeared," is not an idea or a series of ideas, since his whole intention with the monologue is that "ideas fail to appear."

He quotes again Perkins' line about "even when people are altogether wrong you cannot but respect those who speak with such passionate sincerity."

*I can imagine that remark having been made to Galileo and Mencken, Samuel Butler and Anatole France, Voltaire and Bernard Shaw, George Moore...*

"Galileo and Mencken"? Talk about your Odd Couple.

*...and even, if you will pardon me, in this form once upon a time. "You don't like these scribes and pharisees. You call them whitened [sic] sepulchres, but even when people are altogether wrong—etc."*

Fatuous and simple-minded F. Scott Fitzgerald plumbs new lows, drawing an analogy between Max Perkins criticizing Fitzgerald's criticism of the Bible and making it comparable to criticizing Jesus' criticism of the scribes and Pharisees. Small wonder that only a few years hence Zelda was asking Hemingway if he didn't think Al Jolson was greater than Jesus.

Wait, it gets worse

*I do not expect in any event that I am to have the same person-for-person public this time that [This Side of] Paradise had. My one hope is to be endorsed by the intellectually elite and thus be forced onto people as Conrad has.*

As if recognizing exactly how deplorably careerist this sounds (not to mention inaccurate as regards Joseph Conrad's literary reputation), he quickly applies a par-  
enthetical Band-Aid.

*(Of course I'm assuming that my work grows in sincerity and proficiency from year to year as it has so far.)*

If, ahem, he does say so himself

*Please write me frankly as I have you—and tell me if you are speaking for yourself, for the Scribner Company, or for the public. I am rather upset about the whole thing. Will wait until I hear from you. As ever, F. Scott Fitzgerald*

---

\* Mark Twain by Albert Bigelow Paine



*P.S. Besides, as to the position of the thing in the story, it is necessary to show the growth of Maury's pessimism and to do this I have invented a fable in which the hoi polloi [sic] do more than refuse to believe their wise men—but they twist the very wisdom of the wise into a justification of their own maudlin and self-satisfactory creeds. This would discourage anyone*

All I can do is shake my head at this postscript. From where I sit it is not the *hoi polloi* but F. Scott Fitzgerald through his Maury Noble character who “do(es) more than refuse to believe (society’s) wise men (i.e., God’s prophets and messengers)—but...twist(s) the very wisdom of the wise (the Bible) into a justification of (his) own maudlin and self-satisfactory creed.”

I’m not sure about “anyone,” but the whole evasive and self-justifying tone of Fitzgerald’s letter was more than enough to discourage me.

Max Perkins, bless his little editorial heart, backs right off in his reply

*Don't ever defer to my judgement. You won't on any vital point I know and I should be ashamed, if it were possible to have made you; for a writer of any account must speak for himself*

Fitzgerald’s reply is typical

*Dear Mr. Perkins:*

(This is a holdover from a time period when gentlemen were gentlemen. It was “Mr. Perkins” and “Mr. Fitzgerald” for the first five years of their working relationship. They only got to the “Max” and “Scott” stage in 1923.)

*Dear Mr. Perkins:*

*Your second letter came and I want to apologize to you for mine. I might have known you did not mean what in haste I imagined you did. The thing was flippant—I mean it was the sort of worst of George Jean Nathan. I have changed it now—changed “godalmighty” to “deity,” cut out “bawdy,” and changed several other words, so I think it is all right.*

One imagines that this is F. Scott Fitzgerald’s “sort of” “clever in its own way” notion of literary integrity. We’ll get back to George Jean Nathan—whose name only jumped out at me as I was gathering together the raw materials for these notes—in just a moment.

*F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Critical Reception* (edited by Jackson R. Bryer, Burt Franklin & Co., Inc. Series: The American Critical Tradition, New York, 1978 - ?) contains nearly eighty pages of reviews of *The Beautiful and Damned* written in the spring and summer of 1922, after its first publication, from Zelda’s “Friend Husband’s Latest” in the *New York Tribune*, 2 April 1922 (“No one should ever set out in pursuit of unholy excitement with-

out a special vest pocket edition dangling from a string around his neck”), to Louise Maunsell Field’s in the *New York Times Book Review* and various points in between.

Max Perkins had no cause for worry

Fitzgerald’s gifts for writing, his “phrase-making abilities,” are universally hailed. The reviews seem to split somewhat in favour of the view that *The Beautiful and Damned* represents an improvement on *This Side of Paradise* in most of the areas which matter. If any of the reviewers were “needlessly offended” by the Bible passage in Maury Noble’s monologue, they managed to keep it to themselves. The most frequently quoted and/or paraphrased excerpt was:

*“There’s only one lesson to be learned from life, anyway,” interrupted Gloria, not in contradiction but in a sort of melancholy agreement.*

*“What’s that?” demanded Maury sharply.*

*“That there’s no lesson to be learned from life.”*

In fact, very few of the reviews take any sort of ethical or moralistic stance in considering *The Beautiful and Damned*. A couple of notable exceptions:

Henry Seidel Canby, “The Flapper’s Tragedy,” *New York Evening Post*, 4 March 1922: “*The Beautiful and Damned* is not so much a novel as an irresponsible social document, veracious, in its way, as photographs are always veracious in their way, but often untruthful, as photographs are often untruthful, and with about the same relation to the scope and significance of life that is possessed by a society drama in the films.”

Nathaniel Burton Paradise, *Yale Daily News*, 10 March 1922: “Mr. Fitzgerald appears to have tasted the forbidden fruit and discovered the ever strange fact that it turns to dust and ashes in the mouth—a discovery that each generation, it seems, must make from the bitterness of its own experience.”

*Kansas City Star*, 3 June 1922: “It is one of the pities of American letters today that F. Scott Fitzgerald spends his time on pseudo-themes and doesn’t turn his hand to the eternal worthwhile.”

*The Montgomery Advertiser*, 12 March 1922: “When *This Side of Paradise*, his first novel, appeared, the reviewers of the Modern School rose up and cried aloud: ‘Behold a new prophet is risen, who speaketh for Youth in Revolt! All things formerly held to be beautiful, good and true are now become futile, fatuous and fabulous, and worthy of respect no more. The bob-haired girl and the mop-topped boy shall teach you the Facts of Life. Go to, ye elders, hearken unto them.’”

*Literary Digest*, 15 July 1922: “A man is, in the end, no bigger than his point of view, and if Mr. Fitzgerald sees no more in life than the spinning dances of midges he portrays with so much skill and intelligence, then he is but a midge himself, with the single added quality of being aware of his midgeness and able to describe it...When the author does indulge in any philosophizing, he is furthest from his best, he is often indeed rather absurd. Maury, one of the characters, who occasionally



gives forth oratorical pronouncements on the general futility of life, is merely a bore, and a stupid bore."

While most of the reviews adopt a pretty self-evident approach to Fitzgerald's material (an unsigned review in *The Indianapolis News* to me skirts the issue with, "A somewhat fatalistic acquiescence gives the book its tone—that and the darkly colored pessimism of the quite young..."), it was Robert Littell's observation about the relationship between Anthony and Gloria (*New Republic*, 17 May 1922) that cut to the heart of the matter:

*The treatment of the two of them leaves the curious impression that Mr. Fitzgerald was at first inside Anthony's soul and watched Gloria from without, and gradually exchanged these positions. (emphasis mine)*

This seems to me particularly astute, considering that Mr. Littell, in 1922, probably had no clear notion that Anthony and Gloria were Scott and Zelda, and that the "exchange of positions"—actually Scott's capitulation; Zelda doesn't move—was taking place in real life

Okay, now that I've bored everyone to tears with ethics, let's dish the dirt on George Jean Nathan

As I wrote, the name jumped out at me from Scott's letter to Max Perkins as they sorted out their near-differences on "Symposium." I wasn't sure if I was inferring wrongly, but the observation and its placement seemed to imply that Maury Noble was based on an actual person named George Jean Nathan. So, when it came time to do these notes, I went off to the library and started checking the indexes on all the Fitzgerald books for G.J.N. (as I came to refer to him). As always I started with Bruccoli's *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur*, still the definitive Fitzgerald biography, in my book.

"Oh, right, him," I thought.

Shows how much of an impact he had on me the first time through all of these books. One of the Legion of Guys Who Were Willing to F\*\*k Zelda. There were a bunch of them hanging around through most of the twenties. Of course, Zelda's biographers refer to them as Zelda's suitors (although most of them have enough self-awareness to put quotes around it: Zelda's "suitors"). They were suitors in the same way that Stanley Kowalski was one of Blanche Dubois' suitors in *Streetcar Named Desire*. "Suitors."

George Jean Nathan was co-editor with H. L. Mencken of a literary magazine called *The Smart Set*. I believe that Scott was steered in their direction by Max Perkins after Scribners had accepted *This Side of Paradise* for publication—at least partly because Scribners wouldn't pay an advance for the book and Scott needed to make some money while he was waiting for *Paradise* to be released. He rewrote some of his college short stories and sold them to *The Smart Set*, who didn't pay a lot, but they did pay. This would be 1919-1920.

[Actually, later research into the history of *The Smart Set* indicated that Fitzgerald was one of Mencken and

Nathan's discoveries—their best-known, in fact—and that he sold several short stories to them before *This Side of Paradise* was accepted for publication. There is even speculation that Fitzgerald's appearance in *The Smart Set* influenced Scribners to accept *Paradise*, but I find this doubtful. Nathan was, along with Shane Leslie and Max Perkins, one of the three individuals to whom *The Beautiful and Damned* is dedicated, which would seem to indicate that it was he, rather than Mencken, who discovered Fitzgerald for *The Smart Set*. Shane Leslie (1885-1971) was the Anglo-Irish writer who wrote a letter of recommendation to his publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, for "The Romantic Egotist," the first draught of *This Side of Paradise* so the tripartite dedication would seem to be a thank-you to those whom Fitzgerald considered his seminal patrons.]

From Sara Mayfield's *Exiles in Paradise*:

*At the end of July (1920) Nathan laid in three cases of gin and invited Scott and Zelda down to New York to a party at which Mencken was to be present.*

*Although Scott resented Nathan's attentions to Zelda, particularly his facetiously affectionate... This is the same Sara Mayfield who characterized Zelda's go-round with Edouard Jozan as "romantic, decorous, and slightly comic," so beware of loaded adjectives. ...facetiously affectionate billets doux to her, one of which had prompted Fitzgerald to throw a roundhouse right at George Jean... I guess Scott didn't recognize the difference between facetious affection and a real threat. Silly boy... Scott forgave him and decided to go because Mencken, whom he said that he had rather have like his work than anyone in the country, was also to be there.*

That last sentence needs a literary hysterectomy, but you get the idea. That was why George Jean Nathan didn't register with me: it was a case of H. L. Mencken, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and George Who?

When it comes to dishing the dirt, the only real competition a woman is going to have is a Frenchman. From Andre Le Vot's *Scott Fitzgerald* (Julliard Press, Paris, 1979):

*That summer Zelda added a prize catch to her bag of admirers: theater critic George Jean Nathan, co-editor with H. L. Mencken of The Smart Set. Dark and suave, with burning, cynical eyes, he was some fifteen years older than Scott, who admired his urbanity and wit. Nathan at once paid ardent court to Zelda who responded in her usual lively manner, under Scott's approving eye if we are to believe Nathan's testimony. "While Zelda and I were accustomed to engage publicly in obviously exaggerated endearing terms," he later wrote, "which Scott appreciated and which were in the accepted vein of Dixie chivalry, our close friendship was never interrupted."*

Needless to say, for those of you who haven't had any experience with such things, three cases of gin is not exactly what the doctor ordered to keep this kind of arrangement on an even keel. There is only one letter from Scott to George Jean Nathan in *The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (edited by Andrew Turnbull, Scribner's & Sons, 1963),\* dated Winter 1922 (by Turnbull), in which Scott, to my eye, is condescending to Nathan in discussing literary matters. I suspect there was a peculiar balance between the two, probably having much to do with Scott trying to stay on H. L. Mencken's good side. I would imagine that, to whatever extent Fitzgerald appeared to "admire" Nathan's "urbanity and wit," it can be chalked up to strategic necessity implied by Nathan's proximity to H. L. Mencken.

In a really lengthy and beautifully written letter (late summer or early fall of 1930), Zelda encapsulated for Scott her impressions of the entirety of their marriage up to the time of her hospitalization in Switzerland, including

*There was Georges apartment and his absinthe cock-tails and Ruth Findleys gold hair in his comb, and visits to the "Smart Set" and "Vanity Fair"—a collegiate literary world puffed up into wide proportions by the New York papers.*

Atrocious spelling aside, Zelda is, I repeat, the best woman writer I've ever read. If she characterizes *The Smart Set* as a "collegiate literary world," then I think her attraction to Nathan began and ended with the fact of his being "dark and suave, with burning, cynical eyes."

Another excerpt from Le Vot's book.

*One morning when the revelry continued into the dawn, Nathan hid in the cottage cellar in hopes of finding a little peace. He came across Zelda's diary. Struck by its psychological and literary quality, he offered to publish it in his magazine. Scott refused to allow it, saying he had already been inspired by it and planned to use it again in his stories and in his next novel.*

Zelda's hen-house biographers go ballistic over this, seeing it as Scott trying to suppress any chance for his wife's literary fame. I think it reflects that Zelda knew Scott was right. There was no point in wasting the material on a "collegiate" publication like *Smart Set* if some of it might be used in *The Beautiful and Damned* (in fact, several extracts were used, word for word, in the book, leading to Zelda's wry observation in "Friend Husband's Latest" that Scott believed "plagiarism begins at home"). The only reservation that Zelda *might* have had would have been that Scott *should* have used her diary to write more *Saturday Evening Post* stories, which paid huge wads of cash, instead of wasting her material in novels

which took too long to write and didn't pay enough (in her idiosyncratic Zelda view).

I think there was a certain amount of gin-soaked one-upmanship in the Fitzgerald/Nathan relationship, as well Scott trying to get back at George for his flirting with Zelda which caused George to flirt more seriously to get Scott back for getting *him* back. Take these juxtaposed episodes from Le Vot's book.

*When visitors grew scarce, the Fitzgeralds went to New York. Nathan described these forays: "When in his cups, it was his drollery to descend upon my working quarters in company with his friends Edmund (Bunny) Wilson, Donald Ogden Stewart, Ed Paramore and Edna St. Vincent Millay, all in a more or less exalted state, and to occupy his talents in applying matches to the rubber bindings on the pillows on my sofa. Their howls of glee when the rubber started to stench up the place could be heard a block away and were matched by my less gleeful ones.*

This is Scott's "intellectual conscience" howling with glee at the burning of Nathan's pillows, by the way. "Bunny" took a little "intellectual holiday" when he got it bad for Edna St. Vincent Millay (by all accounts).

Oh, yes, Mr. Scott F\*\*king Fitzgerald? Well, how about this.

*An exchange of letters soon became a Nathan-Zelda duet. A few lines from it give the tone. At one point, having annoyed her by informing Scott about one of his warmer notes, he wrote: "Dear misguided woman: Like so many uncommonly beautiful creatures, you reveal a streak of obtuseness. The calling of a husband's attention to a love letter addressed to his wife is but a part of a highly righteous technique...It completely disarms suspicion."*

Which finally (Finally!) brings us back to *The Beautiful and Damned* and Maury Noble's creation. Also from Le Vot's book.

*Most of that summer's events, the visits, benders, quarrels, would filter into the novel Fitzgerald had in progress. He considered making Nathan its protagonist, but his marital problems soon became the book's subject. He discussed it with Nathan, to whom he had spoken of his earlier plan. The critic's recollection points up how impossible it was for Fitzgerald to develop any characters but Zelda and himself. "He came to me somewhat apologetically," the critic wrote, "and explained that he had tried, but could not lionize me in his novel. He said that he found himself unable to write a heroic character other than himself and that he had to be the hero of any novel he undertook. So I duly discovered that*

\* and none in the Bruccoli-edited *Correspondence of F. Scott Fitzgerald*



what he started as heroic me resulted in a wholly minor and subsidiary character not distinguished for any perceptible favorable attribute."

The analysis was confirmed by a note in [Alexander] McKaig's diary: "Fitz made another true remark about himself—draw brilliant picture of Nathan sitting in chair but how Nathan thinks he cannot depict—cannot depict how anyone thinks except himself and possibly Zelda. Find that after he has written about a character for a while it becomes just himself again."

So

I had no idea who George Jean Nathan was at the time I was writing my version of Maury Noble's speech. I was, however, very much aware of the condition McKaig describes here—Fitzgerald's inability to make anyone but himself the hero of his novels—in a different context.

I believe it to have been one of the greatest disappointments of Fitzgerald's professional life that Hemingway's first reaction to *Tender is the Night* (in a letter dated May 10, 1934) was that the book was false because the character of Dr. Diver, originally based on their mutual acquaintance Gerald Murphy, had ended up being a pastiche of Murphy and Fitzgerald. Typically, Hemingway was brutal in his dismissal of the book, and my own view is that Fitzgerald never quite recovered. After all, it had taken him almost a decade to complete *Tender*, and he had every reason to believe that if *anyone* would appreciate the innovation and the effort he had put into the book, it would be Ernest Hemingway. The *really sad* part of the story is that by April 1935, Hemingway had changed his mind about *Tender is the Night*—the book improved each time he reread it. By March of 1939, Hemingway was writing to Perkins "It's amazing how excellent much of it is." "Excellent" was underlined twice. But, by then, the damage had been done.

I had basically extrapolated Fitzgerald's "autobiographical imperative" into the idea of F. Stop Kennedy addressing his monologue to himself in the form of different characters: his younger newlywed self, his younger writer self, and (perversely) his younger newlywed wife.

I thought I was on pretty safe ground with this, particularly in light of Fitzgerald's notebook observation: "There has never been a good biography of an author. He's *too many people* if he's any good." (italics mine)

The name "Blatchford Symington" was lifted from the aforementioned short story, "Absolution" (which I highly recommend), which was the name of the narrator's idealized self. I changed the spelling of the name from "Sarnemington" to "Symington" as another "cute" John F. Kennedy tie-in. Stuart Symington was the name of one of the United States senators whom Kennedy beat out for the 1960 presidential nomination of the Democratic Party

Although I tried to create a more ethical F. Scott Fitzgerald in F. Stop Kennedy—including having him see Gloria/Xena a lot more clearly than Fitzgerald ever saw Zelda (in my opinion)—he still sees his wife as an aspect of himself, a part of his own personality and being. This seems to me to be a very common ethical flaw among men

But I'm getting ahead of myself again.

Page 268 – At the most extreme depths of my own alcoholism (or "alcoholism" or Alcoholism—I got so tired of trying to tell the difference, I basically gave up drinking), I was subject to blackout episodes. Quite literally, I would be drinking like a fish and having what I thought was a wonderful time, and then I would wake up in my bed or on my couch, usually fully clothed, with no sense that any time had passed and no recollection of how I had gotten from point A to point B. Within seconds of awakening, I would begin to retrace my steps, mentally, following stray threads of remembered conversation—usually arriving back at some metaphorically blood-spattered recollection as I have F. Stop Kennedy doing here. Likewise, the metaphorically blood-spattered recollection would prove to be only the first of many, coming "hard on the heels" of one another "the morning after," leading to what an ex-girlfriend of mine called (rather cleverly, I thought) "chemical remorse."

Page 269 – These two text fragments were part of the initial batch of *The Beautiful and Damned* excerpts that I decided to work with. The first, from the "Symposium" chapter (prior to Maury Noble's monologue), starts under the sub-heading "That Sinister Summer" (page 233). In Fitzgerald's original it concerns the house that Anthony and Gloria have rented in Marietta, New York: a fictionalized version of the 18th-century Wakeman house on Compo Road in Westport, Connecticut which Scott and Zelda (actually Scott's money) rented between May and September 1920 and where Fitzgerald began and wrote much of *The Beautiful and Damned*. At the top of the 11" x 17" photocopy, I wrote: "F. Stop in his compartment reflecting on Cerebus and Jaka in theirs after the bad night."

The second, from "A Matter of Aesthetics" chapter, under the sub-heading "Further Adventures with 'Heart Talks'" (page 388), concerns Anthony pretty far along in his "downward spiral" of alcoholic despair. At the top of the 11" x 17" photocopy, I wrote: "F. Stop on himself, just before the end."

Although I reminded myself often that "Fall and the River" takes place within the specific confines of 220 pages and is, therefore, "short story-sized" like F. Scott Fitzgerald's "May Day" (first published in *The Smart Set*, July 1920)—that is, a *long* short story but well short of a novel\*—this was far from my mind as I reworked

\*My own belief that there should be some sort of demarcation in the comic-book field between a "graphic novel" and a comic-book story has fallen on completely deaf ears. I suspect that my suggestion that the 220-page "Fall and the River" would qualify as the latter while *Going Home* would qualify as the former will further solidify my reputation and standing in the field as an eccentric, marginalized, and thoroughly discredited nutcase. Mind you, I'm not complaining. I save a lot of money on air travel this way.



the initial batch of excerpts. Of course, once it came time to place these two excerpts where they “belonged” in the context of my own story, the discovery that “after the bad night” and “just before the end” landed on the same page was a pretty sharp reminder. Yikes (as they say). I was working a couple of months ahead of Gerhard at this point, so the two excerpts just floated on page 269 for quite a while until I began work on page 307 and their new context emerged, which I will deal with when I get to page 307 below.

Page 270 – As a writer, it inevitably amazes me what people see in my work. Of course, it also amazes me what I think I see in the writing of others. Many is the time that I’ve gone back to a book or a passage that has had a profound effect on my thinking, only to find that the book or passage bears only a cursory resemblance to the book or passage that I remember—in those instances where it doesn’t say exactly the *opposite* of what I remember it saying.

Given the visual metaphor (page 255, bottom panel) that I used to depict the Cirinists’ tripartite reaction to this part of F. Stop Kennedy’s “Singularity” monologue, I don’t think it’s an impossible “stretch” that the Cirinists’ emotion-based, mind-reading natures would substitute “dutiful sisters” for “cows.” No more of an impossible “stretch” than—say—when women hear “romantic love” in rock ‘n’ roll song lyrics when what is being sung about is good old-fashioned sex.

Page 271 – Unwittingly, F. Stop Kennedy has tracked metaphorical mud into one of the Cirinists’ nice, clean gray areas first alluded to in *Melmoth* (page 37):

*To the Cirinists the author is their only concern. Once he’s been approved as a “jolly chap” by every mother who has known him since infancy, he could write a recipe book on the preparation and serving of “Cirinist cutlets” and it would be of no interest or concern to them whatsoever.*

Two things about F. Stop Kennedy catch the Cirinists with their metaphorical pants down. First, the *roman à clef* which confounds the too-literal Cirinist mind (“mind” would not be overstating the case, I don’t think). F. Stop Kennedy “is” Jay Anthony Diver. In the Cirinist world, there is no such thing as “is.” To the Cirinists, either F. Stop Kennedy *Is* Jay Anthony Diver or F. Stop Kennedy *Is Not* Jay Anthony Diver. To F. Stop Kennedy, Jay Anthony Diver, Ginevra, and Jozan are fictional hand-puppets useful only insofar as he can utilize them to communicate ideas, in the most literal sense of “utilize” and “communicate.” To the Cirinists—and, in my experience, to *any* female mind—the *roman à clef* is a thinly veiled confessional by which an author introduces a proxy so he can admit to feelings and experiences and emotional reactions which would be too painful for him to reveal without a fictional self to hide behind.

Hah! As if

Second: the Cirinists have no awareness of themselves as a negative, evil force from which any author would desire to be shielded. Related to this, F. Stop Kennedy is aware of Jaka’s power over the Cirinists, which is why he is interested in having her as his patroness. The Cirinists are as ignorant of their “blind spot” for Jaka as they are of their own inherent evil. If F. Stop can get Jaka to be his patroness (in company with other artists and writers), then he knows that his work will enjoy the same knee-jerk approval the Cirinists grant to everything Jaka approves of and he can write more directly and effectively without having to hedge his bets and blunt his points all the time.

This was the real purpose of his “Singularity” monologue: to first of all impart some important information (as a kind of down payment on the valuable things he intends to contribute in the future) and to refute any notion that his intentions toward Jaka are romantic—read: adulterous (he’s aware that this would be an over-riding concern of the Cirinists)—culminating in:

*In the clarity of the brightening day, it seemed presumptuous that with this feeble, broken instrument of his heart he had ever tried to love.*

In at least a dozen different ways he says, “That part of my life is over. My interest in Jaka is not romantic. All I want is the creative freedom that she represents.”

Being women, as well as Cirinists, they don’t hear that. What they hear is: “I love Jaka and I still love Gloria. I want both of them.”

So that’s the joke behind the second Cirinist tearfully telling F. Stop Kennedy that *she* thinks it’s okay: that F. Stop Kennedy and Jaka *should* be together because he *obviously* loves Jaka more than he ever loved Gloria. F. Stop, having no romantic interest in Jaka (well, I mean, sure, he’d like to get into her pants—who wouldn’t?—but he sure wouldn’t take a chance along those lines if it meant jeopardizing, in any way, the chance of Jaka becoming his patroness), just hears the “Jay Anthony Diver deserves some happiness in this life, too, doesn’t he” and “I’m here for you, Mr. Kennedy” part.

(That last panel is autobiographical, by the way. At various points in my life I couldn’t swing a dead cat without hitting a woman who wanted to be my “confidant.” Very seldom was sex suggested, of course, just a solid offer to let me spill my guts to whoever-she-was-at-the-time.

Hah! As if )

Page 272 – F. Stop Kennedy tries to figure out how to turn a would-be woman “confidant” into a bed partner.

Hah! As if.

Page 273 – Female-generated legislation always involves mind-reading, i.e., “unwanted sexual touching and/or advances.” How can a man tell if his sexual touches or advances are unwanted? Answer: he has to read the woman’s mind ahead of time, as women do with men—

knowing with a great degree of certainty whether their overture or advance is likely to be welcome or unwelcome and *not* making such an overture or advance if their mind-reading tells them it is likely to be unwelcome.

It seems more sensible to say, "Any romantic entanglement in the work place is unethical, unprofessional, and counterproductive." That is, sexual overtures or advances should be viewed in the same way as one would view spitting on someone's desk or licking someone's eyeglasses. The reaction engendered should be an immediate "Oh, heavens, NO!" followed by a "look askance" as if to say, "I can't believe you would even consider such a thing as being suitable for discussion."

But, of course, this is not the way of the unfaired sex, who didn't so much *enter* the work force as relocate their peculiar domestic priorities (love *über alles*, romance, matchmaking, gender interchangeability, obsessive interest in their own and others' private lives, excessive discussion of their own and others' private lives, and interference in the private lives of others) bag and baggage into an environment where such "priorities" had, hitherto, been sternly regarded as distractions and irrelevancies where they were not regarded (as I think they have proven themselves to be) as wholly counterproductive and, thus, legitimate grounds for immediate dismissal.

Ethically, I think you have to remove emotion from legislation if you want to frame effective legislation. "No sexual touching" is straightforward. "Unwanted sexual touching" implies that "*some*" sexual touching in the work place is good as long as it is "*desired*" by the "touch-ee" (I'll resist the temptation to make a remark about "touchy feminists" here).

Tangentially—before leaving bad enough alone (as it were)—I'll point out that feminists, thirty years later on, are coming late to the realization that jobs devour lives, leaving table scraps and remnants of time for "everything else" that is commonly regarded as going into the making up of "a life." Very much contrary to Gloria Steinem's early '70s observation—"We have become the men we wanted to marry"—I think it more accurate to say that feminists have become instead the men they wanted to—and in most cases *did—divorce*: workaholics impatient with and intolerant of their "significant others'" unwillingness to subsist on the miserly table scraps and remnants of time which are apportioned to them, after the "job" has extracted its own "pound of flesh."

Of course, now that we know *that*, what do we know?

Page 274 – Crinist adultery laws. I started with what I gather to have been Jackie's view of her marriage to JFK ("As long as I'm the one he comes home to, as long as he's discreet about his affairs, and as long as I'm the one who gets to spend his inheritance when he's looking and his father's capital when he isn't...") and plotted a straight line from there to what I gather was her view of her marriage to Aristotle Onassis ("As long as I almost never have to see him, almost never have to have sex

with him, and I get to spend every penny of his I can—by hook or by crook—get my hands on...").

Tangential digression: How many wives *want* to have sex with their husbands? How many wives *have* sex with their husbands? How many wives see having sex with their husbands after marriage as making about as much sense as baiting your hook *after* you've landed your fish? You could take a survey, I suppose, but I don't think you would get honest answers—wives would answer the way they think they are supposed to answer. You could always make the questions more—penetrating? How many wives think it would improve their marriages if their husbands became permanently impotent? How many wives would consider it "no big deal" if everything else in their marriage stayed the same but sex just "went away" sort of permanently?

I extended my philosophical straight line from Jackie's marriage to JFK to Jackie's marriage to Onassis (On ass. Is.), and what do you know? It hooked up almost exactly with Yoko Ono arranging John Lennon's affair with their secretary, May Pang. A truly pragmatic solution for a truly pragmatic dowager empress...er...woman: Yoko didn't want to have sex with him anymore, she knew *he* still wanted to have sex (for reasons which evidently escaped her—and which escaped all of us guys who saw the *Two Virgins* album cover), she didn't want him running around loose, carelessly spending his own money on trivialities when she needed it to buy basic household necessities like Egyptian sarcophagi. Answer? Pick out a lover for him and call all the shots.

I extended my philosophical Jackie/JFK, Jackie/Onassis, Yoko Ono/John Lennon/May Pang straight line, and what do you know? It hooked up almost exactly with Hillary and Bill Clinton on *60 Minutes* (right after—or was it during half time?—of the 1992 Superbowl). Particularly Bill's implicit (and a couple of times *EX*PLICIT) assertions that he "felt" (I'm pretty sure he didn't say "thought")—that he "felt" that adultery was a private matter between husband and wife. I think this is the reason that so many women were noticeably absent in disapproving of the adultery aspect of the impeachment hearings: the philosophical straight line I've described represents the evolution—in my view, the *DE*volution—of female ethics, so far "advanced" that disapproving of either Clinton represented the potential destruction of the Feminist Nouveau Camelot—where, for one, brief shining moment, Guinevere Rodham Clinton had doting servants, power, influence, fame, closets full of designer clothes, her own sumptuous living quarters and offices, and (evidently by prearrangement) she not only *didn't* have to have sex with her husband *EVER* (O frabjous day!), she didn't even have to give him a passing thought after the election!

Of course the noose gradually tightened around Bill's neck as he held to the view that adultery could be made right as long as a husband and wife agree it is—and loosened only at the point (check the record, folks) where he said that his fate, ultimately, was in the hands of God.



Anyway, the Cirinist laws described on this page resulted from extending my philosophical straight line just a smidgen past 1992 Hillary and Bill.

The squeamish among you should derive great reassurance from the fact that the “castration” the Cirinist is referring to here is accomplished very humanely through an “all-natural” means devised by Cirin’s horticultural genius—similar to the pharmaceutical equivalents available in our own world—and the “subsequent execution” applies only to repeat offenders whose libido is resistant to the aforementioned “all-natural” castration.

At the bottom of this page, F. Stop Kennedy still isn’t quite “up to speed” and thinks the third Cirinist is just trying to “head him off at the pass” with what he takes to be a virtual “sure thing” of getting laid with the tearful Cirinist. F. Scott Fitzgerald—like virtually all writers—seemed unable to face, head on, that sleeping with a writer is very far down on “the list” for most women who sleep with a man because of his profession, so I’m having a little fun with that here.

[It took me years to get over the same “blind spot” in my own life: to recognize that the unfairer sex’s disinterest in writers—let alone cartoonist-writers—apart from the occasional literate woman who finds her own absence as a character in a *roman à clef* to be the only serious deficiency in the world’s literature—is actually a great “plus.” Viewed in terms of productivity, it is the job of the lesser professions (actors, professional athletes, musicians) to keep the genuine “babes” from distracting us from the important business of communicating with our own and (hopefully) future generations. Alas, just looking at the wives of the writers I most admire, past and present (with the notable exceptions of two of Norman Mailer’s six wives, Beverly and Norris), I see it hasn’t seemed to work out that way, and writers seem to have settled for what could most charitably be described as “third or fourth string” wives rather than “get the message.” By way of example, I have slept with very few women as sincerely butt-ugly as Ernest Hemingway’s wives—much less married them.]

Pages 275-276 – Extrapolating further on what I would consider to be F. Scott Fitzgerald’s sometimes borderline, sometimes full-blown schizophrenia. In my experience it is only those individuals who harbour secret fantasies of greatness, delusions of grandeur, who are vulnerable in the kind of situation I’m depicting here. Know thyself.

Even beneath the crushing and demoralizing blow of the Cirinists’ neat encapsulation of the Real, real—or, at least, “real”—F. Stop Kennedy, the fantastic notion that Jaka might have some greater interest in him than as a mere patroness gets introduced “by the back door” (as it were).

a) F. Stop Kennedy believes the tearful Cirinist has a sexual interest in him. b) Like all of his vain delusions, he clings to the idea no matter what evidence there is to the contrary (i.e., she left the scene while he was getting “ready”). c) The third Cirinist “busts his balls” as hard

as she can to convince him that he isn’t sexually attractive to ANYone. d) He is unable, because of his delusional nature, to believe he is sexually unattractive to the tearful Cirinist, so he decides the third Cirinist must be lying about everything. e) The seed is planted that he must be sexually attractive to Jaka since the third Cirinist has tried to convince him that he isn’t.

The third Cirinist (I really should’ve given them names, if only for this section of “Chasing Scott”) appears to be overreacting, landing on poor F. Stop with lead-lined hiking boots, but that can be attributed to his having introduced a level of nuance with which the Cirinists are distinctly uncomfortable. They think that he is in love with Jaka and Gloria (and now wants to add the tearful Cirinist to his “harem”). His “reminder” at the bottom of page 274 of the “letter of the law” thus seems to the Cirinist as a real, way-out-of-line “nyah nyah.” Needless to say, you don’t “nyah nyah” a Cirinist, not unless you want to get your balls busted metaphorically (first) with a promise of genuinely physical ball-busting if you don’t “get back in line.”

It is a testimony to the resilience of the genuinely delusional that F. Stop bounces back from this, with the seed planted that Jaka might now be sexually interested in him.

Page 277 – Well, come ON. It doesn’t happen right away. Walter Mitty’s still in shock on this page. Cut him some slack, folks.

Page 278 – Old Canadian joke. Autobiographical only insofar as it always fascinated me to see the reactions of my girlfriends and “girlfriends” from more temperate climates—whose idea of “bundling up” was wearing a T-shirt under a sweater—to winter in Southern Ontario.

Page 279 – New Canadian joke (I just made it up)

Pages 281-283 – Here’s a good example of the syndrome I described in the note for page 270. Way back when I was beginning to write “Fall and the River,” I decided that when it came time to write the description of the artists’ colony on Mealc, I would lift, word for word, Scott Fitzgerald’s description of the “large, proud, rose-colored hotel,” which opens *Tender is the Night*. Had a very clear mental picture of a solid block of text running down the side of page 281 and then a three-page “Go nuts, Ger” of the chateau and a panoramic view of the Sea of the South. Imagine my surprise when I got to that part, dug out my copy of *Tender*, and found the whole thing to be pretty much unusable. “How could I have misremembered this so badly?” Well, misremember it I had. The more I studied the problem, the more I realized that I had projected the writing style of *The Beautiful and Damned* and its structure—scenes like building blocks balanced on top of one another to produce a net literary effect—onto *Tender is the Night*, which was more like an Impressionist painting in its scene-setting, each phrase like a dab of colour, producing a clear mental image



Once I cracked the combination to *that* safe, I just went through and appropriated my favourite dabs of colour and narrowed it down to the ones that would make a sort of free-verse word poem in two “left to right, top to bottom” “stanzas” across Ger’s three-page panorama (which I laid out very roughly to fit the “stanzas”). From *Tender is the Night* (what I stole is not in italics):

Pg. 3 “In the early morning the distant image of Cannes, the pink and cream of old fortifications, the purple Alp that bounded Italy, were cast across the water and lay quavering in the ripples and rings sent up by sea-plants through the clear shallows.”

Pg. 4 “Fifty yards away the ‘Mediterranean’ yielded up its pigments, moment by moment, to the brutal sunshine; below the balustrade a faded Buick cooked on the hotel drive.”

Pg. 15 “It was pleasant to drive back to the hotel in the late afternoon, above a sea as mysteriously colored as the agates and cornelians of childhood, green as green milk, blue as laundry water, wine dark.”

Pg. 25 “Feeling good from the rosy wine at lunch, Nicole Diver folded her arms high enough for the artificial camellia on her shoulder to touch her cheek, and went into her lovely grassless garden. The garden was bounded on one side by the house, from which it flowed and into which it ran, on two sides by the old village, and on the last by the cliff falling by ledges to the sea.”

The last description is of the Villa Diana, which gave me a certain amount of trouble when I decided to use it for the Mealcan artists’ colony. It gave me a bit of trouble because it’s really unclear how large the place is supposed to be—attributable to Fitzgerald mixing up himself with his original model for Dick Diver, Gerald Murphy. If Diver is Gerald Murphy, then that would make Villa Diana Murphy’s Villa America, which, reading between the lines in my research, would make it quite a showplace. If Diver is Scott Fitzgerald, that would make Villa Diana variously Villa Maria (1924), Villa Paquita (1926), Villa St. Louis (1926), Villa Fleur des Bois (1929), or some other of Fitzgerald’s rented accommodations. I switched to the natural assumption that Fitzgerald would have made himself the model for Dick Diver and (ever the Walter Mitty) appropriated Villa America for himself. I christened it Chateau Euterpe, as a nod to the muse of lyric song and music in Greek mythology and because “Euterpe” looks sort of like “Europe.” A muse instead of a goddess, a continent instead of a country.

Since Chateau Euterpe, as depicted by Gerhard from my rough layouts, his own readings of the relevant portions of *Tender is the Night*, and his own research into the Mediterranean architecture of the Côte D’Azur, looks more than capable of fending for itself with or without a resident patroness (see page 234), the insightful reader can be forgiven for thinking that F. Stop Kennedy has not been... entirely...forthcoming with the Princess of Palnu

in describing the situation in Mealc.

Page 284 – Okay. Disagree with me if you want. Call me crazy. I know you do and I know you will, but *here* is my argument against giving emotion-based beings credibility equivalent to what is given sound reasoning-based beings. Jaka makes a very human, compassionate gesture towards F. Stop Kennedy—affectionate, grateful, and very much in line with her status as “still thinking about it” would-be patroness—and F. Stop and the Cirinists (not a bad name for a band) go off half-cocked because adultery is very much “in the air.” But adultery is only “in the air” because of F. Stop Kennedy’s *emotional* reaction to the tearful (*emotional*) Cirinist, which led to the third Cirinist’s *emotional* tirade against adultery and against F. Stop, which triggered F. Stop’s *emotionally* delusional reaction, which planted the *emotional* seed of Jaka’s completely nonexistent (trust me, I created her) “adulterous interest” in him. Nothing *factually* has changed in the story—and yet *everything* has changed in the story because the people *shaping* the story make their decisions and draw their conclusions and inferences based *completely* on emotion.

## GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS

“Remember when you were a kid and the boys didn’t like the girls? Only sissies liked girls? What I’m trying to tell you is that nothing’s changed. You think boys grow out of not liking girls, but we don’t grow out of it. We just grow horny. That’s the problem. We mix up liking pussy for liking girls. Believe me one couldn’t have less to do with the other.”

According to his 1971 *Playboy* interview, Jules Feiffer eliminated this line of dialogue—spoken by the Jonathan character when he is in his forties—from the first draught of his *Carnal Knowledge* screenplay, because it “seemed too on the nose and because I’d rather have audiences figure it out for themselves than say it for them.”

It seems as insightful to me now, at 43, as it seemed to me when I first read it at the age of 15.

But it does seem to leave aside a central fact—that, even at an age when boys *ostensibly* don’t like girls, when “only sissies” like girls, boys *do* like girls. However secretly—*very* secretly before puberty—we *adore* girls. *Specific* girls.

*Beautiful* girls.

That is, I agree with Mr. Feiffer. Except I think that (like most men of his generation) he is so eager to curry favour with the unfairer sex that he, essentially, capitulates to their viewpoint. “Liking pussy,” from the female standpoint, indeed, has very little to do with “liking girls.” However, I think it irrefutable from a purely honest, purely subjective *masculine* standpoint (as irrefutable as respiration, pupil dilation, heart rate, diastolic rate, systolic rate) that “having sex with a beautiful girl,”

“being in the company of a beautiful girl,” and “seeing a beautiful girl” would all—irrefutably—rate much higher than, say, having a rousing discussion of birthing techniques with a portly, middle-aged woman pulled at random from the local bus station, however *likable* the man in question finds the woman to be and however *unlikable* he finds the girl. His vital functions would not lie, no matter how much his societally-imposed or self-imposed political correctness might wish them to do so

*The cute ones want to be pretty, the pretty ones want to be sexy, the sexy ones want to be gorgeous, the gorgeous ones want to be stunning, and the stunning ones just want heroin.*

That’s, um, one of my own.

“Life isn’t fair,” my Dad used to say, always with a decided emphasis on the subject of the sentence. That seems to me nowhere more truthful than in the respective ages of greatest attractiveness for men and women. Or, rather (more pointedly), for men and *girls*.

It is certainly unfair that when a girl hits her peak of physical attractiveness at the age of seventeen or eighteen, her interests lie (almost without exception) in the direction of men much, much older than she is. Or, at least, it *seems* unfair to the seventeen- and eighteen-year-old boys who desire her (usually with a greater sincerity than those men who are much, much older than she is).\*

It is equally unfair that when a man hits his peak of attractiveness much, much later, his interest—his *genuine* interest, his *irrefutable* interest—remains with the seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds.\*\* Or, at least, it *seems* unfair to his female contemporaries who bulge where they do not wish to bulge, sag where they do not wish to sag, and have wrinkles where they prefer that they didn’t have wrinkles. Female contemporaries tend to compensate for these disadvantages by being shrill, strident, hectoring, and obnoxious on the subject of seventeen- and eighteen-year-old girls. That they have had a remarkable success in getting their male—as opposed to masculine—contemporaries to parrot this criticism, to me, really must be counted one of the great “sleight of hand” tricks of the ages

His *genuine* interest, his *irrefutable* interest is, for the unfairest sex, an unhappy truth. But, it seems to me, if the ladies and “ladies” plan to stick around and continue “helping” to remodel reality as we all know it, it is worth asserting that progress, societal or individual, can only be made from a *truthful* foundation—however unhappy—and that no progress is possible from an *untruthful* foundation—however “happy” a lie it is that warms the cockles of whatever it is that the gender opposite is using for a heart these days.

\* To those seventeen- and eighteen-year-old boys, let me reassure you that your time will come. Don’t settle for “what you can get” in your teens and twenties, and you’ll pretty much have your pick of USDA prime cut in your thirties and forties. None of whom (the part you won’t want to hear) is worth the paper she’s printed on.

\*\* We *could* equip every man on the planet with a little “vital functions” monitor that goes “boop boop boop” at varying frequencies depending on his *genuine* interest, his *irrefutable* interest, but what, ladies and “ladies,” would be served by going to all that trouble just to tell us what we already know?

I say all this by way of preamble in the hope (perhaps futile, perhaps not) of suppressing the unnatural impulse which the bulging, sagging, wrinkled, and totalitarian feminist “regime” has imposed on several generations of males (and some men) who might otherwise derive the same genuine value that I do from these excerpts from F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *Notebooks* under the heading “Descriptions of Girls”:

*She was not more than eighteen—a dark little beauty with the fine crystal gloss over her that, in brunettes, takes the place of a blonde’s bright glow.*

*She was a stalk of ripe corn, but bound not as cereals are but as a rare first edition, with all the binder’s art. She was lovely and expensive and about nineteen.*

*A frown, the shadow of a hair in breadth appeared between her eyes.*

*She was eighteen, with such a skin as the Italian painters of the decadence used for corner angels and all the wishing in the world glistening in her grey eyes.*

*A girl who could send tear-stained telegrams.*

*Her childish beauty was wistful and sad about being so rich and sixteen.*

These were all my choices which—for one reason or another—didn’t make the “cut” as F. Stop Kennedy, with stars in his eyes, fills *his* notebook with those that *did* make the cut

Page 288 – Interestingly enough, I discovered very, very late in the research for “Fall and the River” that the excerpt which begins “She comes up to people...” was about Scottie, Fitzgerald’s daughter, the name having been replaced by asterisks in my New Directions Paperback edition of *The Crack-Up*. Very strange that it would have been omitted, since Scottie would’ve been twenty-four at the time *The Crack-Up* was released (1945). Edmund Wilson’s idea to take it out? Or Zelda’s mother/daughter jealousy? Or Zelda’s family? Very weird

Second excerpt, the one that begins “Her voice and the drooping of her eyes...” was actually used in a short story called “Magnetism” written by Fitzgerald in December 1927 (and published March 3, 1928 in *The Saturday Evening Post*), describing actor George



Hannaford's reaction—not to his actress wife Kay, but to eighteen-year-old actress Helen Avery. Helen Avery was another incarnation—the most famous of whom would be Rosemary Hoyt in *Tender is the Night*—of the “teen-aged-actress-and-the-older-man,” which became a recurring theme in his work after Fitzgerald met seventeen-year-old actress Lois Moran on his first trip to Hollywood in January and February of 1927.

#### LOIS MORAN

It's probably best to skip ahead to 1930 and Zelda's first breakdown, when she and Fitzgerald exchanged lengthy and detailed letters on their respective “sides” of their marriage. Regarding that period in 1927, Scott wrote to Zelda:

*I made one of those mistakes literary men make—I thought I was “a man of the world—that everybody liked me and admired me for myself but I only liked a few people like Ernest [Hemingway] and Charlie McArthur [playwright and screenwriter] and Gerald and Sara [Murphy] who were my peers. Time goes by fast in those moods and nothing is ever done. I thought then that things came easily—I forgot how I'd dragged the great Gatsby out of the pit of my stomach in a time of misery. I woke up in Hollywood no longer my egotistic, certain self but a mixture of Ernest in fine clothes and Gerald with a career—and Charlie McArthur with a past. Anybody that could make me believe that, like Lois Moran did, was precious to me.*

Regarding that same period, in her reply Zelda wrote:

*And we were back in America—farther apart than ever before. In California, though you would not allow me to go anywhere without you, you yourself engaged in flagrantly sentimental relations with a child. You said you wanted nothing more from me in all your life, though you made a scene when Carl [Van Vechten] suggested that I go to dinner with him and Betty Compson. We came east: I worked over Ellerslie [the house Fitzgerald rented near Wilmington, Delaware] incessantly and made it function. There was our first house party and you and Lois and when there was nothing more to do on the house I began dancing lessons. You did not like it when you saw it made me happy. You were angry about rehearsals and insistent about trains. You went to New York to see Lois and I met Dick Knight [a New York lawyer] the night of that party for Paul Morand [French diplomat and author]. Again, though you were by then entangled sentimentally, you forbade my seeing Dick and were furious about a letter he wrote me. On the boat coming over you paid absolutely no attention of any kind to me except to refuse me the permission to stay to a concert with whatever-his-name-was.*

Not to put too fine a point on it, but I think much of the conflict between Scott and Zelda can be attributed to his inability to recognize that it is impossible for a man to play “adulterous catch-up” with his wife, for the simple reason that most women won't sleep with a married man and most men will sleep with anything in a skirt that moves. In his letter to Zelda's psychiatrist in March of 1932, Scott wrote:

*Her affair with Edward Josaune [sic] in 1925 (and mine with Lois Moran in 1927, which was a sort of regenge [sic] shook something out of us, but we can't both go on paying and paying forever. And yet I feel that that's the whole trouble back of all this.*

It seems to me that the “trouble back of all this”—or at least *part* of the “trouble back of all this” was that the Fitzgeralds' two-month stay in Hollywood (January and February 1927) inverted what had been the construction of their marriage to that point: Zelda's dominance as a flirt and a near (if not actual) adulteress. Most of their social adventures (as I discovered in my research) in America and in France consisted of Scott, a bunch of men, and Zelda. There may have been a wife or two here or there, but single women were as rare as hen's teeth when the two of them were out on the town. I suspect, like most husbands in this situation, Fitzgerald didn't realize what a fool he looked and what a fool he was—nor did he question the wolf pack surrounding his wife, always attributing it to her charisma and vivacity, instead of the potential piece of ass she presented herself as

That was not the case in Hollywood, a city which has always known whose pocket holds the paycheque (the paycheques tending to be rather larger in Hollywood than elsewhere) and thus ignores the—in the eyes of Hollywood—*interchangeable* spousal custodian whose pocket *doesn't* hold the paycheque. Zelda, I think, gives the game away in a letter to her six-year-old daughter back east: “I want to be in New York *where there's enough mischief for everybody*—that is, if I can't be in Paris” (italics mine). I think this is also the motivation behind a notorious incident (described in Nancy Milford's *Zelda*):

*Samuel Goldwyn gave a costume party for the Talmadge sisters at which Scott and Zelda appeared uninvited. They were found at the street door on all fours, barking, and said they were strangers to Hollywood and couldn't they please come to the party? Colleen Moore remembers that as she was about to get her coat to leave Zelda came in, and they went upstairs together. To her surprise Zelda went into the bathroom and turned on the tub faucets. The young star waited to see what would happen next; Zelda slipped out of her clothes and took a bath. When she emerged, she patted her hair dry, put her clothes back on, and went downstairs to the party.*



Zelda's eloquent point being: I am so unnoticed in Hollywood, I bet I could go upstairs and *take a bath* at one of these parties and no one would notice.

Least of all, I must hasten to add, Scott.

In another letter home to Scottie

*And we have seen so many pretty girls that I did not think there were so many in the world. How would you like to be a moving picture actress when you are a lady? They have pretty houses and lots of money...Everybody here is very clever and can nearly all dance and sing and play and I feel very stupid*

Conventional wisdom having it that Scott and Zelda were an inseparable combination, like pork and beans or rum and coke, Fitzgerald's biographers gloss over Lois Moran. She and her widowed mother (from whom, we are invariably informed, Miss Moran was inseparable, so Lois and Scott were never, never, never, la-la-la-la I'm not listening, alone without Mrs. Moran as chaperone) tend to appear on one page with the Fitzgeralds' arrival in Hollywood in January 1927 and exit two pages later: Mrs. Moran, little Lois, Zelda, and Scott all being great chums together (you see). No mean tactician for a teenager, Lois arranged for F. Scott Fitzgerald to have a screen test (let me echo Gore Vidal with a Fitzgerald fan's greater emphasis on the verb: Where *IS* it?) to see if he might be a suitable leading man for one of her future pictures (I wonder what an actress had to "trade" back in 1927 to get a screen test for someone else; or perhaps the F. Scott Fitzgerald "name value" was enough to make it happen). The screen test was a failure, but you'd never guess that from Zelda's letter home to their six-year-old daughter:

*Daddy was offered a job to be a leading man in a picture with Lois Moran!! But he wouldn't do it. I wanted him to, because he would have made so much money and we could all have spent it, but he said I was silly*

Of course there are the *arguments* over little Lois. Scott defending her that at least *she* was using her talent for something and Zelda, evidently taking this in the "unlike-some-people-I-could-name" spirit in which it was intended, burning her (Zelda's) clothes in the bathtub of their bungalow suite of the Ambassador Hotel while Scott is out having dinner with the Miss (and, presumably, Mrs.) Moran. Nancy Milford, Zelda loyalist to the end, introduced the idea that Zelda burned clothes which she had designed and sewn herself, but one tends to take Ms. Milford's "innovations" with a large grain of hen-house salt.

The next argument takes place on the train headed back east, after Scott's screenplay is rejected. Everyone else has Zelda (at the height of the argument) opening the window and throwing her platinum wristwatch—her first "big ticket item" gift from Scott—from the moving

train. Except Sara Mayfield, who has it *accidentally* get dropped in the toilet and flushed away. Now, that has to be about as unlikely a piece of invention as you could hope to find anywhere. *Accidentally* dropping a platinum wristwatch into a toilet? *Accidentally* flushing it away? *Sic semper* hen-house biographers

According to James R. Mellow's *Invented Lives: F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald* (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1984, Boston), a gossip column of the day, pasted into one of Fitzgerald's scrapbooks, listed Lois Moran's favourite authors as "Romain Rolland, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Frederick Nietzsche [*sic*] and Rupert Brook." I'll just bet. "She is interested in philosophy and swimming, likes to wear backless evening clothes and *collects wristwatches, which she always manages to break.*" (*italics mine.*)

It's amazing to watch otherwise diligent journalists pack all this into two pages and slide it quietly into a corner next to Edouard Jozan, stamped "case closed."

There was an exchange of telegrams as the Fitzgeralds' train made its way back to New York—whether before or after the "platinum wristwatch episode" isn't clear (I would guess "before," as in "leading cause"). Lois Moran's:

*BOOTLEGGERS GONE OUT OF BUSINESS  
COTTON CLUB CLOSED ALL FLAGS AT HALF  
MAST BOTTLES OF LOVE TO YOU BOTH*

And then there was a letter. Did it intercept them en route? Did Scott foolishly show it to Zelda as belated revenge for Edouard Jozan?

*Darling Scott,*

*I miss you enormously...Life is exceedingly dull out here now...I'm wondering what sort of trip you had—you must have spent all your time filling out telegraph blanks, judging from the numerous and hectic wires Carmel [Myers], John [Barrymore] and I received.*

Of course, back east Fitzgerald rents Ellerslie, and at their first house party—who do you suppose would visit but little Lois and "Mother" Moran? May 21, 1927, the same weekend Charles Lindbergh landed in Paris. Where Fitzgerald "landed" when the gin was all gone and the lights turned out is perhaps another question. Critic Ernest Boyd and Carl Van Vechten were also there that weekend. Well, here's a good example of the "journalism" applied to the situation, from André Le Vot's *F. Scott Fitzgerald*.

*Zelda hid her feelings about Lois, but when Van Vechten returned alone the following week, she seems to have gotten drunk and poured out her resentment of the girl, as we learn from a half-serious, half-joking note she later sent him. "From the depths of my polluted soul," she wrote, "I am sorry the weekend was such a mess. Do forgive my iniquities and my putrid drunkenness. This was such a nice place,*

*and it should have been a good party if I had not explored my abyss in public."*

"Half-joking"? Even for someone as strange as Zelda, it would be hard to see any humour in this, and "half-serious" could probably be more accurately replaced with "mordant," "funereal," or "suicidal."

Okay. That's in May. In June, Fitzgerald writes "Jacob's Ladder,"\* one of his longest and, easily, his most passionate short story, about a thirty-three-year-old (Fitzgerald was thirty at the time) who gets sixteen-year-old (!) Jenny Delehanty—later Jenny Prince—a screen test, which leads to her becoming a famous movie actress. Although not in love with her at first, he does, subsequently, fall in love with her.

Just a coincidence, I'm sure, but Jacob C. K. Booth is staying at the Ambassador Hotel:

*He went to the window sometime toward three o'clock and stared out into the clear splendor of the California night. Her beauty rested outside on the grass, on the damp, gleaming roofs of the bungalows, all around him, borne up like music on the night. It was in the room, on the white pillow, it rustled ghostlike in the curtains. His desire recreated her until she lost all vestiges of the old Jenny, even of the girl who had met him at the train that morning. Silently, as the night hours went by, he molded her over into an image of love—an image that would endure as long as love itself, or even longer—not to perish till he could say, "I never really loved her." Slowly he created it with this and that illusion from his youth, this and that sad old yearning, until she stood before him identical with her old self only by name.*

*Later, when he drifted off into a few hours' sleep, the image he had made stood near him, lingering in the room, joined in mystic marriage to his heart.*

Yessir, Scott and Zelda and their little chum Lois Moran.

Give me a break.

If one actually examines the evidence, I think it's pretty obvious that Scott intended to dump Zelda and marry Lois—when Lois was old enough that it would be less of a scandal. I think Lois Moran knew it and thought it sounded okay to her, her mother knew it and thought it sounded okay to her, and Zelda knew it as well—and it was one of the principal causes of her breakdown in 1930. Whatever else was going on—

Scott's drinking, Zelda's dancing lessons—the clock was ticking toward whatever age...20? 21? 22?...Scott had deemed to be "appropriate" or "less inappropriate."

I think the breakdown was the last chance that Zelda saw for her to hold onto Scott, a final desperate pressure tactic: what sort of louse would leave his wife for a young girl after his wife has had to be locked away in an asylum? Essentially, it worked. For the rest of his life—approximately ten years—the lion's share of the money Scott earned from his writing went to pay for Zelda's institutionalized care and his daughter's education. Even had he been inclined to divorce Zelda and marry Lois, he earned barely enough to keep a roof over his own head, let alone his own, Zelda's, Scottie's, and a twenty-something-year-old second wife grown used to the finer things in life.

Lois Moran appeared in several films, including *Love Hungry* (1928), *Mammy* (1930), and *West of Broadway* (1931). She starred on Broadway in *Of Thee I Sing* (music and lyrics by George and Ira Gershwin), which opened December 26, 1931 and had 441 performances.\*\*

All of the stories and articles attributed to "F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald" were actually written by Zelda and "touched up" by Fitzgerald, with the exception of "The Millionaire's Girl" for which (as Fitzgerald writes in a 1934 letter to Zelda) he made no contribution "except for suggesting the theme and working on the proof of the completed manuscript." The rate for their collaborations averaged \$400., whereas the price paid by *The Saturday Evening Post* for "solo Scott" was \$4000. Sometime in 1930, the theme Scott suggested was "a millionaire intends to marry a young actress" (or something along those lines). This would appear to be Fitzgerald's subtle-as-a-brick-in-the-face way of getting Zelda's input on his romance with Lois. Zelda obliges him sparingly with:

*There was a sense of adventure in the way her high heels sat so precisely in the center of the backs of her long silk legs, and a sense of drama in her conical eyebrows, and she was much too young to have learned such self-possession in any legitimate way.*

(emphasis mine) as well as a visit to "Fitzgerald's road-house" (presumably Zelda's sharp-eyed assessment of Lois' visit to Ellerslie in 1927):

*Barry [Scott] sat under one light in the far end of the long living room, turning over a great pile of phonograph records, and Caroline [Lois] sat rigid in the*

\*Genesis 28:12. "And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the Angels of God ascending and descending on it." It strikes me as significant that a lapsed Catholic like Fitzgerald would select such an archetypal image of a spiritual quandary for the dilemma in which he found himself: Zelda or Lois?

There was something of an outbreak of Jacobs at the time. One of the books Fitzgerald gave Lois was Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (the title is taken from *Ecclesiastes* 1:5), whose title character was named Jacob Barnes. Fitzgerald's Jacob C. K. Booth can be read as "Jacob Seeks a Booth," a booth being a dwelling place for the original Hebrew people. Jacob eventually had two wives, Leah and Rachel, and I would not rule out that Fitzgerald might have had this on his mind, as well—however stupid an idea it was for 20th-century America.

\*\*From *F. Scott Fitzgerald A to Z*, Mary Jo Tate, 1998, Checkmark Books, N.Y.



pink shadows, both of them so conscious of the other that they gave the impression of two hidden enemies waiting to attack.

And

*He was spoiled and wild, but since he had probably met Caroline on some sort of jag, there was no reason why there should be any miscomprehension between them on that score. I wondered how he would explain his intimacy with so lovely and scandalous a person to his austere family, and if they would accept Caroline with no matter what explanation he could invent.*

And

*Of course, all the scandal sheets had a dig at them. There were venomous little paragraphs in most of the Broadway oracles, particularly after people found out how strongly his family disapproved.*

And then, finally, the concluding paragraph, which (as I read it) Zelda uses to mix up the Zelda-Scott and Lois-Scott realities—as if to say, “Here. You figure out who I mean”:

*She married him, of course, and since she left the films on that occasion, they have had much to reproach each other for. That was three years ago, and so far they have kept their quarrels out of the divorce courts, but I somehow think you can't go on forever protecting quarrels, and that romances born in violence and suspicion will end themselves on the same note; though, of course, I am a cynical person and, perhaps, no competent judge of idyllic young love affairs.*

Zelda's name being left off “The Millionaire's Girl” when it appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post* (May 31, 1930) is widely believed to be the responsibility of Fitzgerald's literary agent, Harold Ober. I have my doubts. One thing is certain; within a month of writing the story, Zelda checked herself into a psychiatric clinic—Malmatson, outside Paris—for the first time.

*Scott Fitzgerald – A Biography* (Jeffrey Meyers, 1994, Harper Collins, N.Y.) contains the interesting tidbit that Scott and Lois saw each other several times after Zelda's breakdown—a fact omitted in almost all Fitzgerald biographies.

*Lois' later meetings with Scott in the early 1930s, when he was drinking, depressed about Zelda's illness and apparently beyond redemption, were tortured and miserable. “When I saw him in '33, '34 and '35 he was so different from the man I'd known before, and I was still too young to cope with him,” she uneasily explained to [Fitzgerald's first biographer, Arthur] Mizener. “With a little more maturity*

*and wisdom, perhaps I could have helped him. Instead, I just wanted to run.”*

So she would've been 24, 25, and 26 in those years.

The last notation about Lois Moran in Mary Jo Tate's *F. Scott Fitzgerald A to Z* states that she married aviation executive Clarence M. Young in 1935.

Clarence M. Young was seven years older than F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Of course, to me, the mistaken notion that Scott Fitzgerald laboured under was that time can be made to stand still either for oneself or for others. There are two good studio portraits of Zelda, taken in 1918 and 1919, where she is, quite simply, stunningly beautiful. By the time they married in 1920, she was “handsome”—as Gore Vidal described her, with a homosexualist's aptitude for *le mot juste* and “damning with faint praise.” Occasionally thereafter Zelda could be described as pretty (I'm thinking of a shot of her with the baby Scottie, taken in Minnesota). It would come as no great shock for me to find out that Lois Moran experienced the same “erosion” and that Scott Fitzgerald was as disappointed in the transformation of the 18-year-old Lois Moran into the 25-year-old Lois Moran as he had been in the transformation of 18-year-old Zelda Sayre into 27-year-old Zelda Fitzgerald.

Deplore it if you want—I think it is as natural as sunrise and sunset.

Page 289 – “She carried space around with her...” The original in Fitzgerald's *Notebooks* began: “Emily, who was twenty-five...” The age jumped out at me, so I thought I would include it.

Page 291 – “The topic is too sensitive, standing here pissing razor blades.” This was an actual piece of graffiti which was barely visible in the caulking between two tiles in the men's room in Peter's Place (the bar that served as the model for the bar in *Guys and Rick's Story*), directly over one of the urinals.

I needed something sort of “manly” for Cerebus and F. Stop to discuss here, so this is what I picked—having filed it away for use during *Guys* and never having had the chance to use it.

Pages 294-295 – I basically role-played F. Stop Kennedy, writer. “Here's a piece of graffiti—what sort of a story would you make out of it?” I had a fair-sized *Saturday Evening Post* story sketched out in my head before I gave a sharp tug on the leash. “Whoa—just a couple of ideas, thanks. They have to talk about *other* things, *too*.”

Page 296 – This is one of mine which I usually reserve for “men only” company. Males who say, “I have to pee” usually look as if they “pee”—if not “tinkle.” They usually look as if they'd get their feelings hurt and start to cry if you said, “Men piss. Women pee.”

I don't go out much anymore.



Page 305 – That peculiar “no harm, no foul” approach that women take to dispersing sensitive information.

“Why are you telling me all this?”

Well, Jaka *knows* why the Cirinist is telling her “all this.” But the Cirinist can say, “I’m sure I don’t know. Forgive me, Jaka, I can be so silly sometimes,” and, ipso facto, it’s as if she hadn’t said anything. Same as when a woman says, “You didn’t hear it from me” or “Forget I said anything.”

Scary gender, man.

Page 307 – It came time to start work on issue 247 of *Cerebus* (*Going Home*, pages 307-326), and a little voice in my head insisted that I should go to the library and check *The Beautiful and Damned* again. *Again?* I tend not to disbelieve that little voice in my head, but on this occasion I was doubtful. I had already read the book twice in its entirety and most of the way through a third time. Surely there was nothing left to extract from it. “Don’t call me Shirley,” I said to myself (Really. A now-tired old joke from the movie *Airplane* but the little voice in my head tends to imitate whichever personality I’m working with at the moment. My F. Scott Fitzgerald voice starts every other sentence with “Surely,” so...). So, off to the library I go. Since the last section of “Fall and the River” to be directly modelled on *The Beautiful and Damned* was the “Maury Noble monologue” parody, I thought I’d check to see what followed the monologue in the original book.

“The Broken Lute.”

I was dumbfounded.

“The Broken Lute” follows *directly* after the Maury Noble monologue? And the monologue is the *end* of the “Symposium” chapter?! I sat there, staring at the two pages across from each other—grateful for whatever hidden instinct of mine had filed away that little nugget of information—and had then called it to the attention of my conscious mind that morning. I *had* included the opening page of “The Broken Lute” in my initial batch of photocopies, based entirely on the distinctive “look” of the page—with no idea of where it might (or even *if* it might) fit into the work in progress. I returned to the studio, thinking about the two parody fragments hovering in thin air on page 269 now on the wall of Ger’s studio. I grafted onto them two of the “The Broken Lute” puns I had jotted down at the library (bypassing, I think wisely, “The Low Cum Brute,” “The Blow Kin Root,” “The Below Can Root,” and other unsavoury choices), admiring the neatness with which the two pieces now fit the context of the story.

(I belabour the point because it seems to me a good example of one of those occasions familiar to most writers—when some outside agency or other seems to have “taken the wheel” temporarily. “Where do you get your ideas?” Well, where *did* I get the idea to use the opening page of “The Broken Lute” in the way that I did? It came as a nearly complete surprise. Enough of a surprise that it would seem to me dishonest either to take credit or blame for it.

I *still* can’t really believe the juxtaposition. When it came time to write these notes, a couple of months after finishing that section, I had to go back and recheck what I already knew to be true. Surely “The Broken Lute” doesn’t start *immediately* after the monologue. There’s more to the “Symposium” chapter. No. There it was in black and white. And don’t call me Shirley.)

Working with that page over the course of several days, I developed a certain curiosity about it. Whose idea was the italic typeface? Whose idea was the “anti-indenting”—the first line of each paragraph starting a few characters ahead of the rest of the paragraph? Whose idea was it to have the names of the characters all in non-italic capitals, with the initial letter of the name larger than the subsequent letters? Was Fitzgerald *designing* as well as *writing* his pages? If so, he was something of a pioneer in doing so.

“The Broken Lute” moves from its initial quartet of paragraphs into theatrical script format for the ensuing fourteen or so pages.

[A short digression: After I mentioned that, so far as I knew, Fitzgerald pioneered the use of the theatrical script format in novels, I received a letter from a *Cerebus* fan telling me that James Joyce had done so in *Ulysses*. According to Tate’s *F. Scott Fitzgerald A to Z*, Joyce’s *Ulysses* was published around the same time as *The Beautiful and Damned*, 1922. Edmund Wilson wrote to Fitzgerald on 26 May asking if he had read *Ulysses* “Because if you haven’t, the resemblance between the drunken-visions scene in it and your scene in the White House (*in the play* *The Vegetable*, which Fitzgerald was *writing after he completed* *The Beautiful and Damned*) must take its place as one of the great coincidences in literature.” Fitzgerald had *not* read *Ulysses*, which was banned in the U.S. at the time, and asked how he might obtain a copy. Assuming the dates are correct, Fitzgerald and Joyce were pioneering the theatrical script motif *simultaneously*—completely unaware that the other was doing so. (Strange planet, this writing business.)) [See note for page 187.]

Page 313 – I decided to reprise the technique I had already developed on pages 198-199 of using “silent” comics pages leading into a text piece. Part of my ongoing experiment to incorporate text pieces into a comic-book story so that the reader actually *reads* them instead of skipping over them. I’m not pointing fingers here, by the way. I have the same experience when I’m reading a comic-book story and hit a page of text: “Oh, shut. Do I really have to read all THIS?” Which is a very strange reaction from someone who breezed through *War and Peace* in less than a week. Yes, Dave, you have to read *all one page of it*. It seems to me a structural difference between reading prose and reading a comic book. In the former case, one expects to be on a page for a period of time, sweeping one’s eyes across the page in a regular rhythm and pattern—“broom-like.” Reading a comic-book story is more like bouncing a basketball with your eyes or following a trail of bread crumbs. The eyes

bounce from caption to balloon to balloon to caption like a basketball or as if the eyes were snatching up bread crumbs in quick succession. The part of the brain that derives satisfaction from broom-like sweepings, I decided, is a very different part of the brain from the part that enjoys bouncing a basketball or snatching up bread crumbs. The latter analogy is probably more apt. The most satisfying part of reading a comic book is “not knowing where you’re going”—the *surprise* bread crumbs, the story “payoffs.” It’s probably impossible to structure comic-book pages and text together in such a way that broom-like sweepings and snatching bread crumbs exist in happy harmony—at least in the first reading. Once the “treasure hunt” is over, during subsequent rereadings, the part of the brain that prefers snatching bread crumbs to broom-like sweepings is not as eager to be “on its way” (I don’t want to sweep! I have bread crumbs to snatch!); the text pieces are perceived to be more a part of the story and not so much “in the way.” Following three silent comic-book pages with two pages of text might just “work”—the idea being that the text explains to the reader what those “strange bread crumbs” he or she just “ate” were all about. Different readers have different reading biases as well. Some are “sweep and snatch” (reading all the text pieces and letters pages and then reading the comic-book stuff), and others are “snatch and sweep” (reading the comic-book pages first and then the text pieces and letters pages, etc.). Much of the comic-book audience could be described as “snatch purists”—they just plain don’t like any comic book which has *any* text in it larger than a caption. With very good reason, they feel that hanging is too good for that Dave Sim character.

Page 316 – Once again, it seemed as if I were being moved along by the same kind of predestination which I was documenting. Before my trip to the library, I had been rolling ideas around in my head as to how I would communicate the subtle nuances of psychic barriers breaking down between Cerebus and F. Stop Kennedy and a tenuous link between Cerebus, F. Stop, and Jaka being forged (however temporarily).

From my initial notes for “Fall and the River”:

*He [F. Stop Kennedy] mentions M. Zulli by name, which fractures everything in the vicinity—Cerebus flashing back to “Minds,” Jaka to the moment, and the three (in overlapping conversation) getting to the egg and the hand-crafted box. Jaka cries.*

The biggest difficulty was how to convey the explosive subjective *and* objective “otherworldliness” of the sequence, even in as versatile a medium as the comic book. As soon as I saw the return of the “theatrical script” format in “The Broken Lute”—structurally at least—all of my problems were solved. The subjective impact of the sequence could be carried, first, by “Jay Anthony Diver’s” voice-over narration and then by “stage directions” in the theatrical script format. It required

modifying the “overlapping conversation” I had originally intended—making the “psychic violence” more centripetal: Jaka and Cerebus “orbiting” F. Stop Kennedy in a way. In a way F. Stop and Cerebus “orbiting” Jaka, rather than the three of them playing psychic “ring around the rosey” at the height of the sequence, as I originally (and vaguely) pictured it. Once again, the sheer happenstance of how it was all coming together made me wonder if I wasn’t subject to the centripetal force I figured I was just, you know, making up.

I had already decided to experiment with the “camera movement” in the story. Which leads to another digression.

#### DIALOGUE: DAVE AND GER

DAVE: It will probably seem strange to the people reading this—how unaware we are of what the other guy is doing. I’m only vaguely aware of the history of your using the computer to help with the backgrounds. So I thought that, instead of just getting you to insert megabytes and RAM numbers and program names in this section (and creating the false impression that I have the faintest idea what I’m talking about), I thought we could use a dialogue format. So what is the history of you using the computer to help with the backgrounds?

GER: I got the 3D Home Architect software about five years ago. We first used it for the cover of the *Guys* trade paperback, remember? I redid the floor plan onto the computer, printed out a few camera angles, and you picked one. I laid out and pencilled the backgrounds initially, and then you pencilled and inked the characters. Probably the only time that the background was done first. Since then I’ve entered into the computer the two staterooms and the aft deck of the barge.

DAVE: Of course now that you *mention* it I remember. It was one of those things I just don’t retain since I had my own problems to solve. When you started, I was a little worried because computers just seem to devour time. Investing five hours on the “front end” to save fifteen minutes on the “back end.” But we’ve always had the clear division of labour. As long as we each get our work done in time to keep the book on schedule, it’s up to each of us where we invest our time. Do you still use the same software? I know you upgraded the computer at some point because it was taking too long to print out the images.

GER: We upgraded to a new computer because the floppy drive died in the obsolete piece-of-shit 486, which means nothing to you, I know. I hadn’t been able to use the software much for *Rick’s Story*, because it took forever, sitting staring at an hourglass icon, waiting for the 3D images to come up. So I wasn’t getting the “back-end” payoff for the time I spent. The new machine has the megahertz and RAM and disk space necessary to support the same software properly. Now we get virtually instantaneous 3D images on the screen and can adjust the camera position more readily. Though now we need a faster printer.



DAVE: I guess that's what happens when you name a piece of computer equipment after the "morning-after" pill. It's bound to be something of an abortion. I've just been writing the piece that leads into this one (over yonder at the typewriter which *doesn't* have a TV on it), and I've gotten to the part about the centripetal force—the vortex quality—I wanted in this part of the story. It seemed to me that the best way to get that idea across was with an issue-long 360-degree "camera" rotation around the three characters. I've *started* sequences like that before, but then I get bored pencilling them and I throw in a close-up or something. But this time I really wanted to stick with it, and it seemed to me that the best way to make *sure* that I stuck with it was to start with the backgrounds and fit the characters in. I started with page 326—roughing in the five tiers of panels, with the back railing on the barge "swinging shut" like a long narrow gate. Maybe 30 to 40 degrees of a circle. I remember showing you that sketch in my notebook. At 30 to 40 degrees of a circle per page, obviously the camera was going to go around the circle a *few* times.

So when are we getting the new printer?

GER. When something in *this* obsolete piece-of-shit printer breaks. Yeah, I remember looking at the sketches and thinking that I'm going to have to take quite a different approach here. Normally, when I start on a page, the characters are inked in the panel and I figure out, from their relative size and position, what you'd see behind them. But here we were starting on the *last* panel of the *last* page, working our way *backward* through the camera rotation, dividing 360 degrees into fives for the panels per page, and dividing the camera height into equal steps throughout the "crane shot." From the furniture library of the program, I had floor lamps modified in height to represent all the characters and placed them on their carefully positioned chairs. We'd move the camera a little this way, a little that way, raise the camera, lower the camera. We had our little scaled-down, panel-sized window to place over the screen for framing the shot before printing it out, and did it all without anyone throwing a single punch. Someday no comics will be made this way.

DAVE: It was interesting to me because page 326 worked okay. It was just a matter of moving the camera position so that the back railing looked as if it were "swinging shut." But then I tried roughing in the characters on page 325 and getting you to move the camera position so that it matched the angle I had roughed in. I remember wasting a good twenty minutes on that part until I realized the problem—the backgrounds had to come first. And then solving the basic math problem. Place the camera—or rather the "camera," virtual reality being what it is—for panel 1 and panel 5 on the page: a height of sixteen feet and a height of six feet, say, and then divide the height difference into equal parts for panels 2, 3, and 4. And then dividing the "arc" between 1 and 5 into three equidistant positions as well. There was some weird "compression/distortion" effect which obtained that you explained and then I promptly forgot.

Something that made the composition look accurate on the screen but distorted when the images were printed out, that had to do with the "camera" being too close or using the "zoom lens." What was up with that again?

GER: 3D Home Architect is a fairly simple program, I think, as far as the rules for two-point perspective are concerned. If the "camera" is placed too close to an object and at an oblique angle, you get one of the two vanishing points *within* the frame of the drawing. This results in a "fish-eye lens" effect. Optically, the outcome is the curved, distorted image you're familiar with. The program don't do curves so good. You end up with a straight-line interpretation of a wide-angle shot. Very distorted, very unconvincing. What we ended up doing is moving the "camera" well back from the subject, giving us more of a "telephoto lens" effect. Then with the program's zoom-in tool, we could frame the shot. The zoom-in would enlarge a defined area of the drawing and not alter the perspective.

DAVE: I see. Sort of

It was interesting once I had the five printouts of the backgrounds for page 326, and I photocopied them and trimmed them to size and taped them into place on the page. I realized that I could move the camera further—that is, "move" the "camera" "further" by enlarging the last and second-to-last panel backgrounds on the photocopier. So I did that and then realized that I could enlarge them still further and really have a very dramatic "medium shot to close-up" camera movement from panel 1 to panel 5. I was going to do it, and then I realized that it had taken about two hours just to get to that point and I hadn't *drawn* anything yet. The blueprint for *your* part was in place, but so far all I had was a tall lamp, which didn't look much like F. Stop Kennedy, and a short lamp that didn't really resemble Cerebus

I filed it away in my mind, anyway, in case there's a sequence up ahead that would benefit from really dramatic camera movements like that

Someday *no* comics will be done this way

Either that or it'll be two other guys who need to have their heads examined

Page 318 – And then there are things that I have no problem at all taking credit and/or blame for. Way back during "Minds" (pages 140-144), in addition to demonstrating to Cerebus how little he knew about Jaka, I also wanted to lay the groundwork for the wedge I intended driving between them when Jaka came back and the two of them were headed for Sand Hills Creek. I intended that wedge to be the centrality of art in Jaka's life—her love of art in general, quite apart from her *own* art, dancing. Gotcha

Page 327 – I wasn't so much running out of gas on "Fall and the River" as I was running out of ideas of how to maintain the feverish level of interest in the story that I had been maintaining through issue 247. F. Scott Fitzgerald had been as close to a constant companion in my life as I had had since Oscar Wilde back in the *Jaka's*



*Story* and *Melmoth* days. I only dreamt about Fitzgerald once: I was showing him the three parody title variations on "The Broken Lute". He was diffidently noncommittal, which gave the "encounter" an eerie verisimilitude.

On those occasions when I allowed myself to read the story in progress, I was pretty satisfied with the way it was coming together—coloured with hues of disbelief that so many parts of it were actually done. I would never again have to read Maury Noble's monologue, as an example. If the story was not exactly "big box office" in the comic-book world (mired as the medium is in the excesses of Sigourney Weaver/Demi Moore-style "Chick with a Big Gun" feminism when it isn't a snake-devouring-its-own-tail, sentimentally adhering to its parents'—and now grandparents'—"Heroes in Tights" nostalgia), I found that to be more help than hindrance. The fact that there was no reaction to "Fall and the River," either publicly or privately, meant that I had only my own (and Gerhard, *his* own) ridiculously...thorough...standards to deal with, page by page, panel by panel.

I needed some way to "psych" myself for the final push through to the conclusion of the 220-page segment; on the one hand to assure myself that it really all "fit" comfortably into the confines allotted to it (there was no "wiggle" room—if "Fall and the River" "spilled over," it would be at the expense of the third book, which was filling up rapidly), and on the other to buy myself the research time needed for book three of *Going Home* (which was beginning in a little over six months)—something I knew I would be unable to begin while I was still crossing the t's and dotting the i's on "Fall and the River." As it happened, Ger was going on vacation for two weeks, so I was looking forward to Total Isolation (as opposed to my usual "total" or total isolation) to ...what? I didn't know. Something. I would do ...something

So I came into work on the Monday, finished my coffee, orange juice, and donut, and thought, well, here it is. Total Isolation. So what *am* I going to do?

I decided I wanted to read the Pat Hobby stories. This surprised me. If I had given myself some clue that morning that that was what I wanted to do, I could've brought my library card with me and checked the book out (the Kitchener Library has two copies of the first printing of *The Pat Hobby Stories*—Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962—the lucky sods). Oh, well, I'll just read it *at* the library, I thought.

So that's what I did

Fitzgerald's biographers always take great pains to assert that Pat Hobby was not an autobiographical version of Fitzgerald himself. This seems more than a little disingenuous to me. At the time that Fitzgerald created the "down on his luck" Hollywood scenarist who "used to be a good man for structure" and who was always trying to finagle "three weeks at three-fifty" or "two weeks at four hundred" rewriting other people's scripts, Fitzgerald himself had descended from the lofty heights of \$1,250 a week (his salary at MGM when his contract

was not renewed) to the level of having to get freelance work where he could find it. There are differences, of course. Pat Hobby had completely exhausted his writing talents, and most of his "script doctoring" amounted to substituting "crimson" for "red" and the like (in one of my favourites, "Boil Some Water—Lots of It," Pat had been assigned to "punch up" a medical script, and the story's title was the only line he had come up with after several days' "work"). Fitzgerald was at least "flogging" his own work (however unsuccessfully)—trying to get adaptations of his Basil Duke Lee stories and "Babylon Revisited" into development. And if writing was not coming as easily to him as it had in his twenties, he still had considerable literary resources to draw on. He had begun work on *The Love of the Last Tycoon* (as Prof. Brucoli would have it) or *The Last Tycoon* (as Edmund Wilson and posterity would have it). But, thematically speaking, a writer who was once paid \$4,000 for his short stories by *The Saturday Evening Post* and was now earning the princely sum of \$150 per for the seventeen Pat Hobby stories (published in consecutive issues of *Esquire* from January of 1940 to May of 1941) can scarcely be said to have manufactured a "down on his luck" writer out of whole cloth

Arnold Gingrich's introduction is a model of its kind, informative, affectionate, and engaging. Fitzgerald's *Esquire* editor encapsulates their working relationship while, in my view, modestly understating his own contribution to shoring up a writer on whom the world had turned its back. From Mary Jo Tate's *F. Scott Fitzgerald A to Z*

*He praised Fitzgerald's writing in a 1934 letter: "Regarding the written word like a musical instrument, you are the supreme virtuoso—nobody can draw a purer finer note from the string of an English sentence." (Correspondence, p.397)*

Perhaps more significant—widely more significant:

*When Fitzgerald asked for advances in 1935, Gingrich responded that he could not forward money without something to show the accountants and "suggested that he put down anything that came into his head, as automatic writing in the Gertrude Stein manner, or that, if even that were beyond his powers of concentration, he simply copy out the same couple of sentences over and over, often enough to fill eight or ten pages, if only to say 'I can't write stories about young love for The Saturday Evening Post.'" (The Armchair Esquire [New York: Putnam, 1958], p.93)*

The result, of course, was "The Crack-Up," "Pasting It Together," and "Handle With Care," Fitzgerald's trio of pieces for *Esquire* about his nervous collapse. It seems clear to me that without Gingrich's rock-bottom assurances that *anything* Fitzgerald would choose to write would be acceptable, he might never have written

anything after 1935 except for largely worthless Hollywood script collaborations. As confirmation that it was only Gingrich's rock-bottom assurances that allowed Fitzgerald to attempt further writing, I would offer the fact that Fitzgerald himself always described the trio of pieces as "sketches," not articles, thus acknowledging the fact that they represented, in form as well as content, the rock bottom of what Fitzgerald would consider writing.

As Gingrich says in his introduction, quoting from *Esquire's* obituary at the time of Fitzgerald's death in December 1940 (two thirds of the way through the sequence of stories), the Pat Hobby stories were Fitzgerald's "last word from his last home, for much of what he felt about Hollywood and about himself permeated these stories."

Having finished the introduction, I devoured the seventeen stories in a little over two hours. I had to stop several times when my silent laughter threatened to become Unsilent (I'm part of that clearly vanishing breed that believes libraries should be, you know, quiet for the most part). Particularly bad for keeping my laughter silent was "On the Trail of Pat Hobby" where the studio offers a reward of \$50 to whoever can come up with the name of a movie about tourist cabins. Falling-down drunk, Pat grouses that all the good titles have already been taken and offers *It Happened One Morning*. He finally wins the prize accidentally with...*Grand Motel*.

I guess you had to be there

How about this from "Boil Some Water—Lots of It":

*The word boil brought a quick glad thought of the commissary. A reverent thought too—for an old-timer like Pat, what people you sat with at lunch was more important in getting along than what you dictated in your office. This was no art, as he often said—this was an industry.*

*"This is no art," he remarked to Max Leam who was leisurely drinking at a corridor water cooler. "This is an industry."*

*Max had flung him this timely bone of three weeks at three-fifty.*

*"Say look, Pat! Have you got anything down on paper yet?"*

*"Say, I've got some stuff already that'll make 'em—" He then named a familiar biological function with the somewhat startling assurance that it would take place in the theatre*

Great Literature? Well, perhaps not. Unless you consider a solid Zeitgeist connection an indicator (if not a guarantee) of greatness. *Sir Singrim Dak Raj* at the Ambassador Hotel ("Pat Hobby, Putative Father") twenty-eight years before *Sirhan Sirhan* shot Senator Robert Kennedy definitely caught my eye. And I'd defy anyone to read "A Patriotic Short" (the Pat Hobby story that was on the stands at the time of Fitzgerald's death on December 21, 1940) without thinking of John F. Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe. Pardon? Oh, sure. It's just me.

Sorry, I forget that all the time.

So, I closed the book and sat there thinking, "Well Applause, applause, applause." The least I could do, since there wasn't much applause at the time. In a letter to Gingrich in June of 1940, Fitzgerald says, "Will you tell me what response you're getting from them, or does anyone care about anything now except the war?" (Good ol' shallow Scott.) And in October "Deems Taylor paid me a compliment on the Hobby stories the other day. I had about decided nobody was reading them."

I put the book back on the shelf. It had definitely shaken something loose. In much the same way that I had found George Orwell's *Keep the Aspidochelone Flying* inspirational in my teens (Gordon Comstock's life representing a "worst-case scenario" I could scarcely imagine for my late-20th-century career), Pat Hobby and F. Scott Fitzgerald—at the end of his rope and the end of his life, respectively—had gotten the fires of my own interest nicely banked. I wandered out into the library's entryway, pausing to look at a display of teen magazines in the oversized glass case. The title on one of the articles caught my eye.

"Boys We Love."

An odd bit of synchronicity, reminding me of *Esquire's* annual "Women We Love" feature.

"Boys We Love."

I thought about Fitzgerald desperately churning out his Pat Hobby stories at the same age that I am now—not knowing he had less than a year to live. How he was probably thinking about Lois Moran when he wrote "one cute little blonde actress is pretty much the same as another" in one Pat Hobby story and mentioned one of her movies, *Stella Dallas*, in another. I thought about the paragraph in "Afternoon of an Author." The one with all the girls crossing the street. I looked it up later.

*The street narrowed as the business section began and there were suddenly brightly dressed girls, all very beautiful—he thought he had never seen such beautiful girls. There were men too but they all looked rather silly, like himself in the mirror, and there were old, undecorative women, and presently, too, there were plain and unpleasant faces among the girls; but in general they were lovely, dressed in real colors all the way from six to thirty, no plans or struggles in their faces, only a state of sweet suspension, provocative and serene. He loved life—terribly for a minute, not wanting to give it up at all.*

The Aesthetic Moment, which I first became aware of around the age of forty—the same age Fitzgerald was when he wrote the piece.

I shook my head a little bit and turned away.

By the time I reached Queen Street, I could feel it all start to come together. One of those rare times when I was able to be completely aware of and grateful for what I have. Not only what I have, but what I *don't* have. I don't have a wife who requires expensive institutionalized care. I don't have a daughter whom I have to put



through college (according to Gingrich's introduction, Scottie always had a kind word for the Pat Hobby stories. "Why, he sent me to Vassar."). I don't have a producer or a director rewriting my work on the set without telling me. I don't have a studio executive who is going to decide whether or not I have a job the following week.

I got back to the studio and knew what I wanted to do next. I wanted to write a Pat Hobby story. Not knowing what would come out, I rolled a sheet of paper into the typewriter and pounded out the following (which I present just as I wrote it, atrocious punctuation and all):

*Pat Veteran rubbed his eyes and endeavoured to follow the conversation which had given him the slip sometime in the last quarter hour.*

*"Some sort of Laughs," Mr. Marcus was saying "Big laughs."*

*"But I thought," Pat Veteran said, quite reasonably he thought, "that it was a serious piece." Remembering that he had two fifty a week riding on the perpetuation of the already seemingly endless writing of "Fall and the River", he quickly corrected himself. "is a serious piece."*

*"Well it is," Marcus agreed with a wayward fidelity which identified his complete lack of ethics, for which Pat Veteran instantly forgave him in consideration of his expressing it in the present tense. "That's why it needs some big laughs," as if to show he knew a "thing or two about writing", he added, "To balance off all that serious stuff."*

*Pat Veteran felt himself slipping away from the immediate conversation to the small cafe outside the studio gates and the glittering display of bottles of all shapes and sizes, risen, like a tide, against the mirrors along the back wall. Pat Veteran envied those bottles just now wishing that he, too, could rise like a tide against the mirrors along the back wall.*

*"He should do something," Marcus was saying as Pat Veteran's tide came back in or went back out like some great and uncertain metaphor.*

*"Who?" he asked dully.*

*"F. Stop Kennedy," Mr. Marcus was saying, savouring his self-evident assertion as if it were his own particle theory, come to dismantle the way graphic novels had been done up to now. "He should do something." To the Mr. Marcus' of this world there is no observation so banal that it does not bear repeating—as immediately as is humanly possible.*

*"He could get stinking, roaring drunk," Pat Veteran found himself saying. "A bit at a time, see? So it sneaks up on him. He could think he was being debonair, suave—making all these plans in his head of how he was going to make time with Jaka, little set pieces that go wrong." Remembering who he was talking to, he added, "Like Wile E. Coyote with a hard-on in his pants."*

*There was nothing like intentional vulgarity to*

*achieve resonance with Mr. Marcuses (Marcusi?) of this world.*

*"He wants to fuck the Roadrunner." Mr. Marcus' face was a mask of sincere solemnity.*

*"Exactly," said Pat Veteran, wondering, all the while, what specifically it was that he had done wrong in a past life that it had come down to this.*

I reread it, thinking, that's not bad. That's not bad at all

I photocopied the issue number/month cover "bullets" for 248, 249, and 250 from Ger's master sheet (he crosses one off every month—there's a "300 MAR" in the bottom row that's perfectly hypnotizing) and taped them above my Pat Veteran piece.

Then I rolled another sheet of paper into the typewriter and typed.

*Shooting Script, Fall and the River, The Three "Comrades", 248, 249, 250, AKA: Winky, Blinky and Noddy, AKA: F. STOP KENNEDY, CEREBUS and JAKA, AKA: Nov 99, Dec 99, Jan 00.*

*The Three Comrades* (MGM, 1937) was the only film on which F. Scott Fitzgerald received a screen credit

I prepared myself to type out my first comic-book script in more than twenty-five years (not including *Spawn* 10).

It was only after making the decision that I saw it had an interesting logic-of-the-next-step quality about it. In late-20th-century populist jargon, my having begun "Fall and the River" imitating as closely as possible F. Scott Fitzgerald's work habits at the time of *The Beautiful and Damned*, my finishing "Fall and the River" with a Hollywood-style "shooting script" represented...closure

Closure?! Blecchh

Let's go back to "logic-of-the-next-step."

By my best reckoning, of the sixty pages that remained to be finished, forty to fifty of them were already accounted for: their dialogue, pacing, "camera angles," and sequences clarified but otherwise pretty much unchanged from the initial stages of "Fall and the River's" composition

As the "Producer" of "Fall and the River," I imagined myself handing a first draught of the remaining sixty pages to my "Writer" self [the two of us—Mr. Marcus and Pat Veteran, respectively—having already "taken a meeting" on what should be done to build a bridge from page 326—the last page which had been "filmed"—to page 340]. It was now my "Writer" self's job to fulfill the script doctor role on the project—part writer, part stenographer—and deliver to the "Director" (my "Artist" self) a tight, finished script: the working theory being that my "Producer" and "Writer" could then move on to book three of *Going Home* while the "Director" finished "filming" the end of book two

Well, the "best-laid plans..." and all that. What I had failed to take into account was the addition of the "Journalist"—a role unique to "Fall and the River": the writer of these annotations. My "Writer" self finished



the shooting script, my "Director" self finished "filming" pages 326 to 365, my "Producer" and "Writer" selves moved on to the treatment, development, and research stage of book three...

When suddenly—thanks to the demands of monthly serialization—the "Writer" has now had to backtrack, put on his "Journalist" cap, and take several days to document the whole process while everyone else sits around twiddling his thumbs.

"Hurry up and wait" (as the old Hollywood expression goes).

## I, SCRIPTER

My own first efforts to break into the comic-book field were as a writer—or, as it is more commonly known in the "industry," a scripter. After several years of effort, I sold four scripts (one to Skywald Publishing, "Cry of the White Wolf," published in the last issue of *Psycho*; one to Warren Publishing, "Shadow of the Axe" in *Creepy* No. 79?...and two to Star\*Reach Publishing: "I'm God" and "Anticipation" in *I Forget* No. something and *I Don't Remember* No. something else).

What came back to me in a hurry is how stultifying the act of scripting a comic book is. On the one hand, you're trying to maintain a level of creative interest and enthusiasm, and on the other you are engaged in something that is about as creative as barking out latitude and longitude co-ordinates in front of a radar screen, the two conditions alternating in a way that does not lend itself to sustained, inwardly focused "method" acting

BILL: Act one, scene two, approximately three minutes in. I'm standing next to the dining room table, distractedly picking up pieces of wax fruit and putting them back down again. Yvette is behind me. Bill colon I thought things were getting better.

YVETTE: Act one, scene two, approximately three minutes and five seconds in. I am turned partly away from Bill relative to my position in the last panel, my face in shadow. I have raised my hand so it is shielding my eyes. Yvette colon They were dot dot dot Yvette colon dot dot dot for a time

For that reason, I always used to (and I suspect it's rather common among scriptwriters) write the dialogue separately in a notebook or on a loose sheet of paper—without the "page 2, panel 3" and art directions—reading it to myself to check for consistency, conversational rhythms, pacing, internal logic, mood, emotion, etc., etc. and adding all the technical accoutrements in the typing stage

This time out, I had the decided advantage that I didn't really have a "producer" to worry about. In fact, no one—apart from Gerhard—was ever going to see the script, let alone reject it or send it back for revision. I set

myself a goal of ten pages a day—a higher-than-average quota for scriptwriting (from what I remembered), however (I reasoned) I already knew two-thirds to five-sixths of the content. If I met my goal, I would be done in six days.

It was rough going—as I said, stultifying. I ended up cracking stupid jokes in the art directions, making fun of my own typos and whatnot. Far closer to the forefront of my awareness than was creatively healthy (in my view) was how far along I was. I remembered that from the "old days" as well. Page five of issue 249—35 pages to go. Page seven of issue 249—33 pages to go. By "days five and six" I spent an unconscionable amount of the day riffling through the finished pages. Not reading them or even skimming them—just flipping through them, weighing them in one hand, pinching the stack of pages between my thumbs and forefingers. Handing them to myself ("Here's the script!"). Handing them back ("Where's the rest of it?").

Part of it, I think, is that one script looks pretty much like another. At the end of a week of drawing—pencil-ling, inking, and lettering—I'll have four, five, or six pages on my wall, each page different from the others produced that week, last month, and the month before that. At any greater distance than a foot or so, there is no way to tell the script pages for pages 334 and 335 from the script pages for pages 349 and 350. It was only the size of the stack of pages and the number of pages that remained to be done that gave me any awareness of progress.

I even succumbed to the "pointless distraction syndrome"—the self-destructive part of any writer that embarks on any (I mean, ANY) time-consuming, useless enterprise rather than stick with the project at hand. One of the days became almost a complete washout (three pages instead of ten) because I suddenly took it into my head that some benefit would accrue from reducing all of the script pages onto half-sized photocopies, spraying the backs with spray adhesive, and pasting them into my notebook, two to a page. As near as I can reconstruct it, I thought that I could keep a diary of some sort in the space left over while I was drawing the pages, documenting where and why, as an artist, I had chosen to deviate from the art descriptions.

So, seven—instead of six—days later I had the finished script. I finished "Chasing Scott's" latest installment, answered all the mail, cleaned up the studio, handed the script over to the "Director," and...

## I, ARTIST

Being an all-Cerebus, all close-ups page, page 329 posed no great difficulty (the "writer" part of me was a little disappointed that I didn't jot down all my creative decisions into the space left on the notebook page where "he" had pasted in the little reduction of the script page). The next day I went on to page 330. Early on in the scriptwriting phase, the "writer" had obviously tried to write the art direction as if it were the start of a... not particularly good...*Saturday Evening Post* story

*(CAMERA pans in or trucks in or dollies in or whatever it is that CAMERAS do, closing in on CEREBUS'S left shoulder. Just over his left shoulder, JAKA is visible, standing uncertainly at the top of the stairs which lead down to the CIRINISTS' quarters. It's hard to show uncertainty in silhouette, so let's do it with a vague uncertainty of the positioning of the hands, both on one side, holding the chain "handrail" and the fact that she takes only one step down the stairs over the course of the three-panel pan truck and or dolly.)*

Make that a particularly *bad Saturday Evening Post* story

So I went into Ger's studio and got the model of the barge that he had built and mounted on a camera tripod (so we would have "Look, Ma, no hands" reference next to the drawing boards when either of us needed it for checking the "camera angles"). I set it up next to my drawing board, tilting it so I could squint directly along the line of sight in the art description.

The Cirinists' quarters were in the way.

I mean—not only were the Cirinists' quarters in the way (the top of the stairs wasn't visible from the front of the barge), but...how was *anything* supposed to be visible "just over Cerebus's left shoulder"? He was leaning against the mast, and the barge's hold, directly behind, was the same height he was. Even leaving aside the fact that the "handrail"—when I checked—turned out to be a rope and not a chain...

I did the only sensible thing under the circumstances  
I ignored the art direction.

I changed the three-panel sequence so that the "camera" started with a head-on shot of Cerebus in the first panel and then moved *up* the mast in the second panel—"discovering" Jaka—and moving a little closer to her position in the third panel

I wrote a note to Ger at the top of the page:

*So much for a shooting script—nothing is visible the way I described it. The camera will just have to move up the mast and aft over the course of the top three panels. Jaka is still standing at the top of the stairs. There's not much point in my trying to put her in first, so I'll wait until you have the background [pencilled] in to do so.*

As an afterthought, I did a reduced photocopy of my "roughed in" first three panels with the note to Ger at the top and taped it into my notebook—OVER the reduced photocopy of page 330's script

And that was the last time I even *read* the art direction

Page 332 - Mindful of the "line of sight" problems between the forward hatch and the top of the stairs, I depicted F. Stop Kennedy up on the point of his toes to observe Jaka as she arrives adjacent to Cerebus's position.

Pages 334-337 - Originally, I envisioned F. Stop Kennedy continuing to observe Jaka and Cerebus's confrontation as he fantasizes about the course of their conversation. That seemed like a long time for a hung-over, middle-aged writer to stay up on tip-toe, so (I rationalized) he continues to stare in the general direction of the front of the barge, but he is completely lost in his day-dream.

Page 338 - Okay, then (smart guy). If that's true, then how does F. Stop Kennedy "see" Jaka and Cerebus coming back to their stateroom, when he is bent forward enjoying his imaginary kiss?

Well, I was counting on the fact that not too many of you would go to the trouble of building your own model of the barge so you could see that it wasn't possible.

Trust me. If he were so inclined, after *Cerebus* is completed, Ger could write his own thick volume of annotations entitled *Why You Wouldn't See That From There and How I Got Around It*, featuring the door to Pud's tavern in *Jaka's Story* switching several times from opening to the right to opening to the left and back again.

Fortunately, Ger is far more interested in spending time on his sailboat when we're done, or I would really look like a fool

Page 341 - In portraying the Cirinists, I try to be very careful to limit myself to straight-line extrapolations from where our civilization used to be to where it is now and extending the straight line into the future. It is not parody or caricature to me; it is pure extrapolation.

Here I am taking how our civilization used to be—what went on between a man and his wife was the business of the man and his wife and no one else—plotting a straight line from there to our own age of shelters for abused women and restraining orders against husbands and ex-husbands—and seeing where this is likely to lead as women increase their participation in the judicial and legislative branches of our society. It is very difficult for unthinking emotion-based beings to see this as anything but Dave Sim Advocates Spousal Abuse, which is, to me, the far more genuinely terrifying threat to society, that such beings who are unable to differentiate between extrapolation and advocacy are allowed to occupy positions of authority. Since thinking beings, I'm sure, *will* understand the extrapolation that I am portraying here, I will address myself to the unthinking emotion-based beings instead.

I do not advocate spousal abuse. I have never hit a woman myself, although I have been hit *by* them. If a boyfriend or a married man asks me (as some have), I always tell them the same thing. All you can do is say "yes, dear" until you say "goodbye." Reason has no chance in any conflict with emotion, and my not inextensive experience with women has shown me that "letting the matter drop," "let's not go there," and "I think we have to stop talking about this now" are stopgap measures and Band-Aid solutions. "Can we put this behind



us now?" was one that I thought was pretty cute, as well. My last time out, I was tempted toward the end to say, "Shit—everything *else* is back there. You think there's any room left?"

I can understand the need for shelters for *physically* abused women. I do not agree with expanding the definition of abuse to include things like shouting or profanity. I can understand the need for restraining orders against abusive husbands and ex-husbands—*physically* abusive or those who *threaten* physical abuse. Likewise with stalking, in person, by phone. All of that. No problem.

But it does concern me that women think that these measures are inadequate. That they think it should be made easier to have a boyfriend or a husband arrested. One quick phone call. Slap a restraining order on him from the comfort of your home or office with rubber-stamp approval guaranteed.

This is the centerpiece of my extrapolation.

A straight line from a man and wife being a completely-behind-closed-doors-inviolate-two-person-confederation-with-liberty-and-justice-for-all to the introduction of judicial and legislative measures which *mandate* the intrusion of the police and the courts into that previously inviolate two-person confederation and which see the measures which currently exist to be inadequate—such a straight line leads directly, in my view, to fascism, totalitarianism, bad, no-good, icky, really not nice, who broke the nice dolly? etc., etc.

Capice?

Yeah, you bitch. *Capice?*

Oh, look at the pretty Nazi all mad.

See, guys?

Do you understand now?

Page 344 - Fitzgerald alluded often in his writing to his rich, Walter Mitty-like fantasy existence and the vivid interior movies he played and replayed in his mind to lull himself to sleep at night—F. Scott Fitzgerald, the heroic captain of the Princeton football team, single-handedly scoring the winning touchdown in the waning seconds of the game. F. Scott Fitzgerald, the war hero, single-handedly leading a charge against the enemy, which turns the tide of battle. I would imagine all of these had ticker-tape parades and medals and whatnot attached to them.

One of the more striking examples of this takes place in *The Beautiful and Damned* (pp. 225-226):

*The day passed slowly. Anthony, riding in a taxi to his broker's to borrow money on a bond, found that he had only two dollars in his pocket. The fare would cost all of that, but he felt that on this particular afternoon he could not have endured the subway. When the taxi metre reached his limit he must get out and walk.*

*With this his mind drifted off into one of its characteristic day-dreams... In this dream he discovered that the metre was going too fast—the driver had*

*dishonestly adjusted it. Calmly he reached his destination and then nonchalantly handed the man what he justly owed him*

Well within the boundaries of conventional day-dreaming, the endless sorting through of "what ifs" to which every human mind is susceptible.

But then there's this whiplash assertion, without transition or preamble:

*The man showed fight, but almost before his hands were up Anthony had knocked him down with one terrific blow. And when he rose Anthony quickly side-stepped and floored him definitely with a crack in the temple.*

I mean, doesn't it seem to you as if there are a couple of lines of dialogue missing here? "Hey, buddy, this ain't enough," and "Not enough, you scoundrel? I'll show you 'not enough.'" Almost as if Fitzgerald can't wait through two lines of dialogue to get to the "good stuff."

This was one of the excerpts I pulled out right away.

Page 347 - From F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Notebooks*. This would seem to encapsulate his own most frequent view of his "Life with Zelda," about which he was largely fatalistic and which he seemed to see as predestined.

Page 348 - Also from *Notebooks*, the other side of F. Scott Fitzgerald. There are few examples of these sentiments in Fitzgerald's writings after 1924 or so. The one I like the best is from *Tender is the Night*, as Dr. Diver converses with "his most interesting case," an unnamed female patient who is one of the many Zelda stand-ins in the novel:

*"But it's only by meeting the problems of every day, no matter how trifling and boring they seem, that you can make things drop back into place again. After that—perhaps you'll be able again to examine—"*

*He had slowed up to avoid the inevitable end of his thought: "—the frontiers of consciousness." The frontiers that artists must explore were not for her, ever. She was fine-spun, inbred—eventually she might find rest in some quiet mysticism. Exploration was for those with a measure of peasant blood, those with big thighs and thick ankles who could take punishment as they took bread and salt, on every inch of flesh and spirit.*

*—Not for you, he almost said. It's too tough a game for you*

A sentiment worthy of Norman Mailer (or at least Hemingway).

I suspect that Zelda read this passage in one of the many draughts of *Tender* while she was in the Phipps Clinic at the John Hopkins University Hospital in Balti-



more, thought to herself in her best Scarlett O'Hara voice, "Oh, fiddle-dee-dee," and proceeded to produce what is, to me, the best women's book ever, *Save Me The Waltz*, in a six-week burst of unfettered creativity while Fitzgerald continued with his seven-plus years of wrestling with *Tender*. Of course, in Fitzgerald's defense, Zelda didn't have a Zelda causing her trouble and endlessly distracting her.

Page 349-366 - "Comics' Longest Pan Shot!" I was tempted to run that tag line on the cover. Interested Cerebus scholar squirrels are invited to pull out their copies of *High Society* and turn to page 289.

The pan shot begins from a vantage point somewhere around the "a" in "Campaign," looking north. The former Papal Farm Lands and The Docks and Area are unaffected by the devastation. On the Iest and Suburbs side of the river, all that is left is what you see here. Approximately where the Chesmi River meets the Feld are the Chesmi Rapids (around the broken bits and tiny islands). Approximately where the "19" is on the map is the location of The Dead Salt Locks and Canal which connects Dead Salt Lake to the Feld River. If you draw an imaginary line from the "19," following a curve just south of the small canal which partly encircles Greater and Lower Iest (west and south of the city), extending that curve north to the Feld River to a point just east of the small canal to the east of the city...that whole area is now Dead Salt Lake (which isn't really a lake—it's just a really, really, really dramatically widened part of the Feld River).

The voice-over narration is freely adapted from the Book of Isaiah and the Book of Jeremiah (but definitely not the Book of Ezekiel) and constitutes Cirin's best assessment of the "off-camera" chat she endured after she disappeared out of "Minds" on page 65 (you know the old expression, "out of sight, out of 'Minds'"). Anyone interested in determining what Cirin might have been told "off-camera" in addition to these excerpts is welcome to search for them in the Book of Isaiah and the Book of Jeremiah (but definitely not the Book of Ezekiel). You can't miss 'em. Or maybe you can.

You'll notice that the vegetation on the Northbell District side of the river gets a little thin starting on page 351. The land mass was unaffected on that side of the river, but all of the vegetation was pretty much wiped out. Even umpty-ump number of years after the disaster, the scrub that you see is all that will grow in a wide radius around the former site of Iest.

Page 354 - A fragment of the top of the wall of demon heads and skulls is the only feature which rises above the waves of Dead Salt Lake.

Page 355 - Most versions of Isaiah translate it as: "How hath the Golden City ceased?" The only place I've read "Exactresse of gold" is as an alternative translation in the margin of my facsimile of the 1611 King James Bible. "Exactresse of gold." That's perfect.

Page 356 - The railings depicted here are modelled on those on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls—the "Horseshoe Falls" as they're known. My favourite place in the world.

Page 357 - Cerebus fans with long memories will recall Cerebus's last trip to the Northbell side of the river (*High Society*, page 373). Cerebus fans with even longer memories will remember his *first* trip to the Northbell side of the river (*High Society*, page 335). Anyway, Cerebus's unconscious mind remembers too, as he flails about for a suitable euphemism for goddess worship (page 335, panel 3).

For his part, F. Stop Kennedy muses aloud about Anders Sherwoodsen, a parody of Sherwood Anderson (1876 - 1941) about whom F. Scott Fitzgerald enthused to Max Perkins in a letter sent circa June 1, 1925 (*Life in Letters*, pp. 119-120) as "one of the very best and finest writers in the English language today." He was later to change his opinion at the behest of the author of *The Torrents of Spring*—but, no. You'll just have to wait for book three of *Going Home*.

Page 358 - Iest being, as you can well see, "out of commission," there was a pressing need for a new port at the vital confluence of the Feld, the Oesis and the Chesmi. At the time of "Fall and the River" that role is being filled by the rapidly expanding new town of Northbelle, named after the former electoral district and acquiring (no big surprise) an "e" on the end in the process.

Page 381 - The first appearance of a black person in *Cerebus*—and it's a WOMYN! And not only a *black womyn*, but a black womyn with a *pierced nostril*! For people who find those sorts of things terribly exciting, well, be still your beating hearts, eh?

Fresh from a moment in *Cerebus* history like that and with just a sketchy outline to the right of Jaka, I was seized with further inspiration. "Is there any reason," I asked myself, "that this Cirinist shouldn't be...*Jim Valentino?*!" Not only Jim Valentino, *normalman* and *Shadowhawk* creator, not only a *womyn*, but several inches *taller* than Jim Valentino is in real life! The Zeitgeist connection was apparently too much for the "real" world to bear, and scant days after I finished inking this panel it was announced that Jim had replaced Larry Marder as Image Comics publisher.

Page 384 - A parody of Fitzgerald's original conclusion to *The Beautiful and Damned*, which underwent at least three known revisions. The first closes with Beauty's return to paradise [having been told about her imminent incarnation as Gloria by "The Voice" in the "Flashback in Paradise" section (pp. 27-30), this plot element is left hanging in the finished book]. This was replaced for its serialization in *Metropolitan* magazine (September 1921 to March 1922) with the piece that I am parodying here.

*That exquisite heavenly irony which has tabulated*

the demise of many generations of sparrows seems to us to be content with the moral judgements of man upon fellow man. If there is a subtler and yet more nebulous ethic somewhere in the mind, one might believe that beneath the sordid dress and near the bruised heart of this transaction there is a motive which was not weak but only futile and sad. In the search for happiness, which search is the greatest and possibly the only crime of which we in our petty misery are capable, these two people were marked as guilty chiefly by the freshness and fullness of their desire. Their disillusion was always a comparative thing—they had sought glamor and color through their respective worlds with steadfast loyalty—sought it and it alone in kisses and in wine, sought it with the same ingenuousness in the wanton moonlight as under the cold sun of inviolate chastity. Their fault was not that they had doubted but that they had believed.

The exquisite perfection of their boredom, the delicacy of their inattention, the inexhaustibility of their discontent—were disastrous extremes—that was all. And if, before Gloria yielded up her gift of beauty, she shed one bright feather of light so that someone,

gazing up from the grey earth, might say, "Look! There is an angel's wing!" perhaps she had given more than enough in exchange for her tinsel joys.

...The story ends here.

On December 23, 1921, Fitzgerald wired Perkins: LILDA [sic] THINKS BOOK SHOULD END WITH ANTHONY'S LAST SPEECH ON SHIP SHE THINKS NEW ENDING IS A PIECE OF MORALITY LET ME KNOW YOUR ADVICE...

Only "Lilda" could make morality into a pejorative.

While I think *The Beautiful and Damned* is Fitzgerald's best and most honest book, I have to confess that I think the ending is terrible and I suspect that this is a major reason why *The Great Gatsby* was, and is, better received by the reading public and the critics. Like *Tender is the Night*, it has a great and memorable ending.

With all due respect to "Lilda" and Max Perkins, I think the above ending would have been a vast improvement

... "Fall and the River" ends here

But not really. Now the "Director" has to go back and film pages 366 to 385



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**James Guarnotta –**

pg. 56 (Cerebus no. 254 pg. 10)  
pg. 57 (Cerebus no. 254 pg. 11)

pg. 58 (Cerebus no. 254 pg. 12)  
pg. 59 (Cerebus no. 254 pg. 13)



above: Issue 239 page 7, scanned from a print copy of the issue. below: the same image, scanned directly from the original art board.



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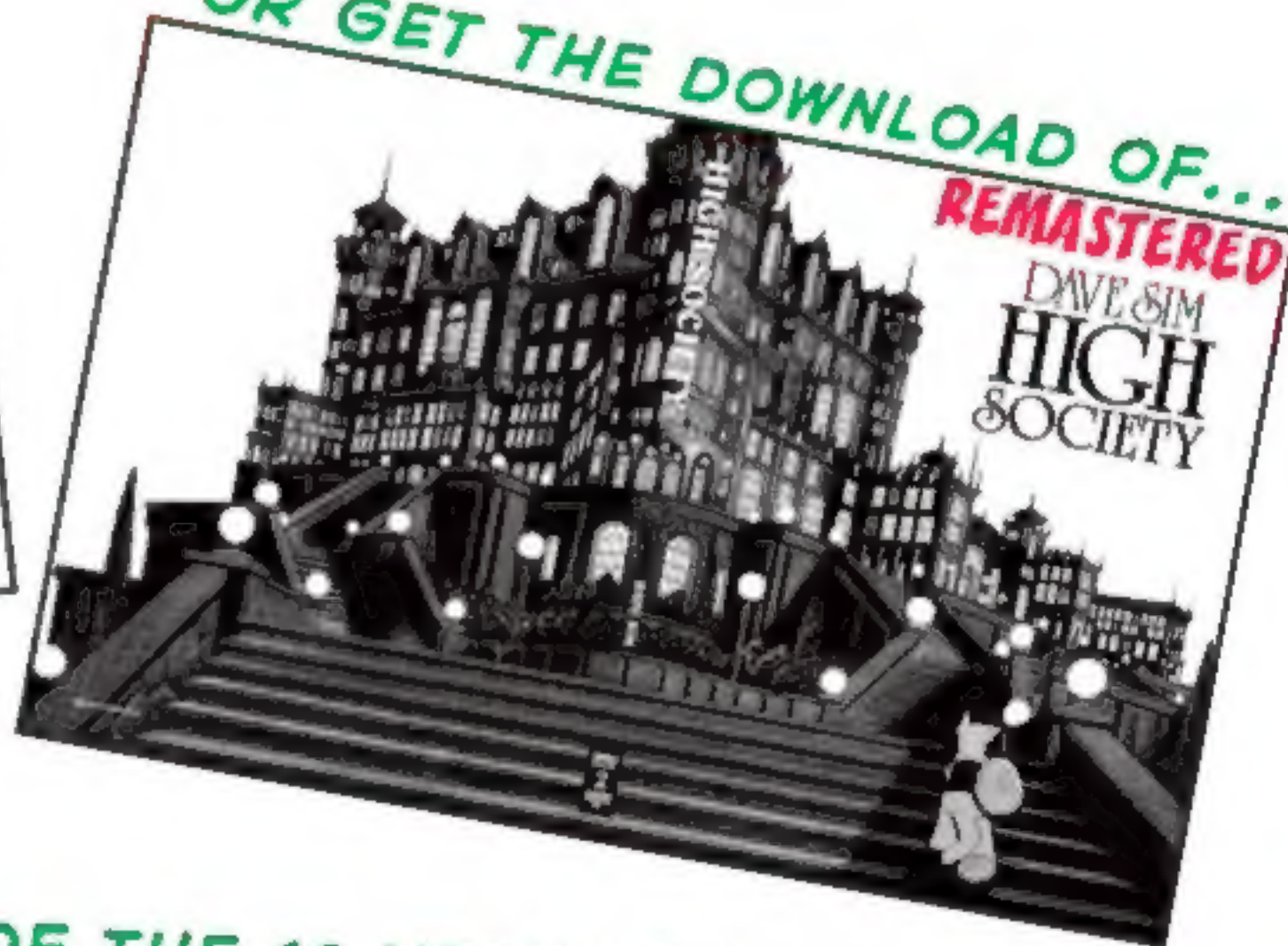
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